

電 馬 士

日 生 刻 の

瑞智士記

Shiki
MIZUCHI

Ⅲ Ⅹ 鯖コハダ

IV

MF文庫



星刻の竜騎士

ドラグナ1

IV





雷は二度、三度と繰り返された。
そのたびに、シルヴィアはピクッと身体を震わせて、
アッシュを抱き締める腕に力をこめる。
……どのくらいの時間、そうしていたのだろうか。



我ながら、
色気とは無縁よね……と思う。
「……！」

そんな思考がよぎった直後、
アーニャは狼狽した。
一体、自分はなにを考えているのだろう？



Milgauss
ミルガウス

Veronica
Lautreamont
ヴェロニカ・ロートレモン

Eco
I-I

Silvia
Lautreamont
シルヴィア・ロートレモン

Ash
Blake
アッシュ・ブレイク

Anya
アーニャ



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Prologue

Lautreamont Knight Country, people called it the country of Dragon Breeders.

Sandwiched between the two major powers, to the north was the Zepharos Empire, while to the south was the Chevron Kingdom.

A small country, with a population of no more than five million, had a special academy.

Ansarivan Dragon Riding Academy.

Educating and guiding teenage boys and girls who formed a contract with dragons -- an academy for Dragon Breeders.

Part 1

"Let us celebrate Ash's discharge, kanpai!" ^[1]

Rebecca, the student council president, with a brilliant smile leads the rest by raising her glass.

This place is the students' restaurant 'La Tene' and a private party is being held tonight to celebrate Ash's discharge from the hospital.

"Congratulations on your recovery, Ash. From tomorrow onwards the student council will have many chores that will keep you busy."

Rebecca says with a sly smile.

"I thought I had become used to being terrified by your way, where you never take your life as a priority, of dealing with things... It seems that I've underestimated your foolishness."

Max uses his fingers to adjust the position of his spectacles, and speaks to Ash with an ironic poker face.

"Hey, Ash..... is this heaven? Not only Eco, Princess Silvia, Rebecca onee-san are here... Even Lucca Sarlinen is also present! Jessica may be crazy, but she is in fact very popular among the boys! Harem bastard!"

The one whispering into Ash's ear is Raymond. He must have been getting carried away for being in the student council where there are many beautiful girls.

"I can stand you no longer... At least this time you got to taste some bitterness, right? Next time, I'll never allow you to act rashly."

On the other hand Silvia, without changing her serious attitude, continues to lecture Ash.

"Hehe. When the message about Ash-sama's discharge was received, Her Royal Highness Princess was obviously over the moon -"

Cosette, the maid beside Silvia, lifts her masquerade with a smile.

"Cosette! Why do you always speak the unnecessary-?"^[2]

"That..... Thanks to Ash's help, I'm back to my old self and Gawain is also very grateful."

Lucca who is almost hidden behind Silvia puts her whole effort to express her gratitude.

Although she is originally a quiet person and is often expressionless, she is a delightful girl like a yousei^[3], but after the selective training camp, Ash feels that he can get along with her better. Although, during the recuperation period, she is the one who grabbed the chance to take care of Ash's daily needs.

"Don't worry about it, you and Gawain have also saved my life. If not because of the dragon riding dance being a success, I might not have lived."

Ash's answer causes Lucca's face to blush and lower her head. After a moment, she raises her head again with determination.

"That..... If you are willing, then in the summer holidays, you can follow me back to the Ecbald village."

"Ash-sama! Since the training camp, every night my body feels lonely! Tonight I swear to not let you sleep!"

Jessica, at one side with a provocative voice interrupts Lucca who is putting in effort to reveal her thoughts to Ash, while moving closer to Ash.

"Hey Jessica, don't you think you are simply speaking without thinking!" Silvia immediately looks at her in disgust.

"Why is Her Royal Highness Princess angry? This is my problem with Ash-sama? Or is that Her Royal Highness Princess is interested in..."

"H-How is that possible! I just cannot stand your shameless words and deeds!"

Silvia and Jessica, who don't want to back down, make Ash begin to sweat.

"Say, isn't Eco too quiet today....." Ash thinks as he glances at the seat next to him...

"Gurr."^[4] Eco's stomach lets out a grumble.

Eco gets attracted to the roast chicken.

According to the waitress, this roast chicken dish is carefully baked with Chevron tender chicken.

"Hold on. You must first pray to Saint Rosa Maria before you can eat." Ash quietly whispers to Eco.

It's basic etiquette to pray to St Rosa Maria before eating.

Seeing Eco has a strong appetite, everyone cannot help but smile.

Even though he knows that they don't mean anything bad, Ash still feels embarrassed.



The truth is, the young dragon Eco is Ash's Pal. There is nothing wrong even when she is said to be his family.

Because she is connected with Ash through the dragon's contract- 'Seikoku'.

- But then again.....

Ash recalls the time the selective training camp was held at the Allonne's^[5] lakeside.

Milgauss again had summoned the Necromancia to attack.

With everyone's effort they managed to repel the enemy, but Ash was seriously injured and needed to stay in the hospital, for recuperation, for two weeks after his return to Ansarivan.

- That Milgauss..... he said Eco is the 'Avalon's Imperial Princess'. In the end, what does he mean?

Ash wants to ask Angela-sensei as soon as possible.

But Angela is on duty at the Willingham Mausoleum, and hasn't come back yet. The secret chamber that Angela discovered a while ago, its investigation is still on-going.

-Imperial Princess...

Even when in the past... Which Ash is reluctant to think about... The day he must face it seriously may have arrived instead. His reason for becoming Eco's owner.

Unlike other dragons, the reason Eco was born as a girl.

And the reason why Eco was born into this era...

Just when Ash was thinking, the prayers to the Virgin had ended.

"Let's eat!"

To save time from cutting, Eco gives the chicken a bite right away. The moment her teeth pierce the meat, the juices with a "pssss" flood out.

"Hafuhafu..... nnn ~ how come this is so delicious!"

In order to protect this happy face, no matter what, he had to settle things with Milgauss. Just as Ash makes up his mind, Rebecca begins to speak to him.

"What's the problem? You look preoccupied."

"Nothing, err..."

"You may have many unanswered questions but forget about them, at least for tonight. This feast is to celebrate your discharge from hospital."

It seems that nothing can stay hidden from Rebecca.

"Haha... You're right. Then I'll relax and enjoy the night."

After Ash squeezes out a smile, with some effort, he gulps down the liquid in the glass-

"Cough! R-Rebecca-san..... is this...?"

"Why make such a fuss, it is only some grape juice."

In his memory, he seems to have heard before something similar... remembering this, Ash gave a bitter smile.

"Don't worry about it. There are many children from the Chevron Kingdom next to us, who drink this as if they are drinking water."

"But this is the Knight Country..."

"Ash, you are too old fashioned. After a long time in the hospital, surely you must have accumulated a lot of stress. Tonight's feast is for everyone to have a good time, what's the problem if everyone indulges a little?"

Rebecca says, smiling.

"If Ash-sama has really accumulated stress for so long, I can always accompany you! I'll help you squeeze you out clean, not even a drop will be left!"

Jessica is holding another bottle and suddenly leans over.

Even though the feast started not long ago, her cheeks are flushed, and her eyes are in a watery state.

"Stop thinking anything shameless! Anyway, the thing that I have accumulated is nothing but pressure!"

While Ash is trying to talk back -

Lucca looks up at the ceiling and mutters. "Something... is approaching."

The unique ears that only an Ecbald have are showing their reaction by twitching.

Ash eyes are directed to Lucca –

- Tooooooooooom!

An explosion like impact causes the glasses in the shop to shake.

"What is happening?"

Rebecca shouts in a nervous voice.

Just when everyone is showing a shocked expression, and intends to rush to the window to take a closer look -

"Pardon me!"^[6]

A woman wearing a yellowish green dragsuit majestically opens the door.

"I am the first-class palace messenger, Olietta Blanc! The Paladin has sent letters to be received by Princess Silvia, Her Royal Highness!"

Part 2

Silvia, who has put on her pyjamas, is sitting at the table, reading the letters sent by her father.

The feast is still on-going in the student's restaurant 'La Tene', but Silvia had left before twelve midnight.

Her father's letter is making her worry endlessly.

Her father has seldom held a pen, and to even make a big fuss to write, the situation should be very urgent.

"Hug...? Just for only such things."

After reading the letter, Silvia moans and groans.

"Haa. Father really knows how to give people trouble."

Silvia throws the letter onto the table and lies down on her bed. After tightly hugging a large size pillow that needs both hands to hold it, she rolls around her bed. Because she was troubled.

"Your actions are bad Princess."

Even when Cosette rebukes her while bringing the herbal tea before bedtime, but Silvia still continues to roll around.

"What did the Paladin state in his letter?"

"He ordered me to..... attend the Continental Congress 'Elysium' together."

"Then I should congratulate Princess."

- Continental Congress 'Elysium'

For every five years the leader of each country will gather for the congress, such is the tradition of the Ark Strada continent.

The Holy Espada Agency. As the core of the Rosa Maria religion it's in charge of every congress.

The location is decided by the Espada's Pope through divination.

This year's conference has entered its seventh term and the decided location is Lautreamont Knight Country's capital Fontaine City.

Certainly everyone in her home town, Fontaine City, has gotten caught up in the mess.

"Do you know that it is this congress that will change the fate of this continent? It is a burden too heavy for me."

"Are these the only things mentioned? According to my observation, Princess is troubled by some other things?"

Once finished, Cosette exposes a smile.

"Why... are you so sure?"

"Because the Princess now is full of a 'woman's expression'."

"D-Don't talk nonsense! How can there be any woman's expression!"

"Please excuse me." Cosette politely informs Silvia, takes the Paladin's letter and reads.

"Oh my! Written on the letter is 'When returning home, be sure to bring Ash Blake and and young dragon Eco with you'. What type of situation is this?"

Cosette seems to have a gloating look.

"... This means that the father has also heard the rumours about both of them."

"Uhuhu. Going on a journey to go back to Fontaine City together with Ash-sama? Now I know why Princess is troubled. Princess is controlling Lancelot's reins while Ash-sama is tightly holding your waist from behind-

"Stop having that strange delusion! I tell you, I don't have any little shameless ideas! Moreover, our Lautreamont family have the family rules that state 'boys and girls mustn't ride together after seven!' That... I'll return home on Lancelot, while there will be no problem for him to walk there."

"My my, what's there for you to be shy about? Obviously you have ridden with Ash-sama several times."

"...!"

At that moment, she remembers the ride with Ash which gives Silvia a shock. As if she can feel Ash's hands holding her waist tightly.

"Y-You, be quiet!"^[7]

Silvia, knowing her face is red, grabs the pillow and throws it at Cosette with force.

"Mail Dragon ~ A.S.B.1365.7 ~" is closed.

Chapter 1 - Knight Princess's proposal

Part 1

The next day after the party.

Since after another week will be the end of semester test, once the afternoon class has finished, many students hastily packed their bags and returned home.

Ash was also scheduled to return home immediately for self-study. Before the exam, since the student council's activities are temporary suspended, he doesn't need to go to the office after school.

"Why is Eco absent today?" Raymond who had already packed his bag asked Ash.

"Err... The party last night had left its mark... The word 'absent' shouldn't be used to describe this situation... Right? It's Eco who sneaks into the classroom and after that she will immediately fall asleep..."

"Haha, so cute. The reason she is willing to attend this totally boring class is just because she doesn't want to leave your side, don't you think so?"

"How can that possible..."

Ash, while smiling, took out several books from his locker, that he had never used before, and placed them in his bags. Raymond gave an exaggerated sigh, but Ash didn't understand his reasons for doing so.

That moment, someone was moving towards Ash.

"... Ash... may I have a word with you?"

After he lifted his head... That person was actually Silvia.

Silvia rarely takes the initiative to speak to others in the classroom— not to mention if the other party is a boy. But in the past few months they faced several hardships together, and he somehow feels that Silvia is easier to approach compared to the past.

But in the classroom, she is still the majestic and stern 'Ice Blue Princess'.

"If the two of you want to talk alone, then this nuisance will leave quietly."

Raymond left the classroom with a knowing smile.

The others who are packing their bags and ready to go home also cast a curious sight.

"Uh... How can I help you?"

Ash nervously asked.

"That... In fact... Father... Ordered... Wants you to f-f-follow me..."

"Follow you?"

"J-Just take it as I didn't tell you anything!"

"Princess!"

Totally ignoring Ash, as if saying too much already, Silvia swiftly took up a distance and, in the blink of an eye, had left the classroom.

"... What was that about?"

Ash, 100 percent totally stunned, still standing in the same place, looked bewilderingly in the direction of the door that Silvia just ran out of...

Part 2

After about two hours of studying, in the academy's library, Ash returned to the boys' dormitory.

Although he is confident about the practical test, the written test is another story, so it's necessary to carefully review over it again.

By the way, as long as Eco was in the same dormitory room with Ash, with all the normal concerns of a parent, his reading/studying efficiency will clearly drop. This is one of the reasons that, as long as Cosette is with Eco... Ash prefers to use the library.

Dusk. ^[8]

The scene outside the Apollo house was fully dyed in the red rays of twilight. Just as Ash, after an evenings study, is walking toward the entrance—

- Tooooooom!

"Wah!"

A strong gust of wind, together with a sound of an impact, suddenly hit Ash from behind. Ash stumbled and fell face forward, subsequently knocking into the main door.

"What happened...!"

Ash rubbed his forehead while he turned his head around.

"Please excuse me! Are you Ash Blake-san?"

A familiar lady is sitting on a winged Strada. The woman, seemingly in her early twenties, is cheerful. Her shoulder-length hair swayed with the breeze. She is also the one who appeared in the students' restaurant last night.

"I am first class palace messenger Orletta Blanc! I have a message for you!"

"For me...?" Ash, looking confused, has in no way been involved in any such important matters before.

Orletta jumped down from her riding gear, took out an envelope from her shoulder bag and handed it to Ash.

"May I ask who sent this letter?"

"That's a secret."

Orletta, while maneuvering her Strada into position, gave out a playful laugh and, before Ash understood what was happening, they took off and flew up into the sky.

Part 3

Once Ash is back into his room, he saw Eco sleeping on the bed with her limbs spread out. The few children's picture books beside the pillow were given to her by Cosette to keep her from being bored.

Only when she is sleeping, is her face like an angel, innocent and lovely. - Just when Ash thinks so, Eco happens to roll over.

Her skirt is lifted up by this action, thus revealing her pinkish thighs. Her underwear can almost be seen.

"Uwaaa...!"

Ash quickly adjusts her skirt back to its original position.

Although he knows she is a young dragon, but whenever he runs into this type of situation, his heart starts to beat quickly.

"Really, it can be bad for my heart..."

Ash took a deep breath, after he felt calmed down, he sat cross-legged on his personal mat.

Then he tore open the envelope that he had just received.

Only now, Ash realized that this is a very high quality envelope. The quality of the paper sold in the nearby stationary shop cannot be compared with this.

Ash carefully draws the letter out, like he is dealing with a fragile item.

—Tomorrow at lunch break, I will be waiting for you at the fountain in front of the academy.

However, there is only a short sentence in the letter.

There isn't any signature on the letter.

"What exactly is this?"

Ash was surprised and involuntarily muttered.

"Huh... You're back?"

Eco rubbed her eyes and slowly sat up.

"Sorry, did I wake you up?"

"That letter... what is written there?"

"Ahh, this? The messenger just sent it to me..."

Ash showed the letter to Eco.

Although Eco was just a three month-old young dragon, she can get all kinds of information from the Dragweiss. Of course, reading should not be any trouble for her. Even though only picture books interest her at present, sooner or later she is bound to get interested in literature.

Eco stared at the contents for a few moments, and then her eyebrows suddenly gave a reaction.

"That person really has some guts, how dare he send a challenge letter!" Eco suddenly stood up while announcing her indignation.

"No, how could this be a challenge letter..."

Even though Ash tried to sooth Eco... But, in fact, within his heart, he was also baffled.

Part 4

".....Why did you come here together with me?"

The next day, during lunch break, Ash followed the specified time in the letter and came to the fountain in front of the academy. There are benches everywhere in the campus, many students are here chatting while enjoying lunch.

"Do I even have to give a reason? I'm your master! By sending a letter of challenge to you... It's just the same as sending one to me! I am gonna personally trample on them!" Eco says with an aloof, imperial-like condescending voice. ^[9]

Eco was in her uniform and crossed her arms while standing beside Ash, waiting for the mysterious sender to arrive.

"Haa. I had already said that it's not a challenge letter."

Ash can't recall doing anything outrageous, that would cause someone to challenge him to a duel.

Not long ago, Ash was still the 'Number One Problem Child in the academy'- and had received disapproving attention in all aspects. Though after Eco's birth and then both of them joining the student council, he had since been living a relatively low profile life. Rebecca also supported him, which is probably also a very critical factor.

"Anyway, he is very slow... how long does he intended to make us wait?"

Eco can't be blamed for being angry.

It has already been thirty minutes since the start of lunch break.

"Nn...?"

At this time, Ash sensed someone staring at his back, he then quickly turned around.

A female student is secretly hiding behind the shadows and has been quietly observing them.

Perhaps she thinks that she is safely hidden, but brilliant golden hair can't be hidden so easily.

"Princess?" Ash confronts her.

The moment she's staring face to face with Ash, Silvia's face stiffened and she swiftly ran away.

"Please wait Princess! You have some business with me right?"

Ash quickly chased from behind.

"Could it be that... the letter was from Silvia?"

Eco, who is also along for the chase, asked.

"Probably. Let's calm down and think. Her attitude yesterday after school, using the palace messenger and the high quality envelope and paper... this evidence is sufficient enough to prove that the sender is likely to be Princess. Hey, Princess! Why are you running away?!"

"No! Don't call out to me so loudly! Lancelot.... Through the name of Silvia Lautreamont I summon you!"

Right at that exact moment... There is a flash in front of Silvia, and Maestro Lancelot appeared.

Silvia nimbly jumps onto Lancelot. The moment she lifted her legs to sit on the saddle, the uniform's skirt momentarily fluttered up.

A pure white cloth greeted Ash's eyes. Just when Ash blushes, Lancelot had already skyrocketed up and away.

"Is it magic?"

Ash is stunned. Is Silvia so desperate to escape she needed to summon Lancelot?

Moreover, riding on the dragon without the dragsuit is a violation of the school rules. The law abiding Silvia would actually violate the school's regulations? This means the situation is no trivial matter. Eco, however, is unphased and in completely normal form...

"Stop, do you know who I am!? If you do not want to be crushed by me... then immediately return!"

Eco is stomping while shouting toward the sky.

"Come on, it's Lancelot that we're talking about..... The one who will be crushed should be you."

Ash shrugged with a smile.

"What did you say!!!"

Eco's cheeks are now red with anger; she then turns her attention towards Ash.

At this moment...

"Hey, hey, Lancelot! I ordered you to fly! Who allowed you to land!"

Unexpectedly. Lancelot actually returned, did a full emergency landing in front of the fountain, and sat down. Not only that, it also lowered down its neck in front of Eco.

"It can't be... it really obeyed Eco's order?"

Ash glanced doubtfully at Eco.

Eco proudly straightened her flat chest and took a step forward. ^[10]

"Well, now you'll have nowhere to run. Just tell me why would you send a letter of challenge to Ash!"

"T-That is not a letter of challenge..."

Silvia is sitting astride on the immovable mountain that is Lancelot's back. Her eyes are in tears. Such situation is extremely humiliating for a Dragner—let alone the highly self-regarded Silvia.

"Princess... If you have any trouble, you can talk about it with me..."

"D-Don't give me that kind of sympathetic look!"

"I'm sorry..."

"Alright, I understand! I will not run away from the truth! And I am no longer confused! Because I'm the Princess of the Lautreamont Knight Country! Ash, listen carefully!"

Silvia shouted with the top of her voice on Lancelot's back.

"I hope you join me... Come home with me to meet my father!"

In that one instant, the entire campus, already amused by the events, became frozen in silence all at the same time.

Ash is also stunned, and his brain ceases functioning.

"Wooooow! Princess is proposing to someone!" Someone just had to say it!

That person's shout had become the trigger and caused an uproar in the entire campus.

Unwittingly, the students who are scattered throughout the campus eating their lunch suddenly surrounded them.

There is a reason for the uproar caused by the students.

In general, for a Dragner to properly propose, they normally have to be mounted on their dragon. And Silvia, coincidentally riding on Lancelot, is even requesting Ash to meet with her father.

From the others view point, this is a proposing scene.

"I had felt suspicious since last time... To think the two of them had already progressed to this point!"

"Impossible, their status difference is too big!"

The campus is now in quite a storm, and everyone was giving Ash and Silvia various curious looks.

Silvia flushed while making a rebuttal:

"W-What I had said bears no such meaning! It's totally different! Anyway... it's better for a man to propose.... No, it's not like this! Ash, please deal with the things here!"

After Silvia desperately yelled all that, she sat for a moment on Lancelot's back, and then bolted away.

"E-eh! How can you throw me this mess, Princess..."

Ash said with a surprised look.

"Ash! In the end, will you accept it!?"

Large numbers of students continued to approach and surround Ash. Eco is beside him and naturally is also involved. Both of them are squeezed by the others.

"Arghhh! I've had enough! That's why I say human are stupid and ignorant... I will crush you all!"

Eco's roar can be heard up into the blue sky.

Part 5

Silvia proposing to Ash— Having spent a lot of effort to unravel the misunderstanding, and somehow cornering Silvia and asking to explain her intentions, he found out a far more shocking fact than being proposed by Silvia.

He didn't think that Paladin Oswald would actually summon both Ash and Eco.

He is the country's king.

Of course... Ash doesn't have the right to reject.

"Dragner's Tradition ~A.S.B.1365.7~" is closed.

Chapter 2 -Fontaine City, the capital of the Knights

Part 1

Early in the morning, on the fourteenth day, in the month of Cancer.

The day to depart for Fontaine City, the capital of Lautreamont Knight Country, had finally arrived. Ash and Eco had already made their preparations for the journey and were again standing in front of the campus's fountain.

Actually; today also happens to be the first day of the semester examination finals. Though Ash and Silvia had already formally requested to leave the school grounds they will have to take a makeup examination when they return to the Ansarivan Dragon Riding Academy.

But with the thought of meeting with the Paladin, Ash felt that the final semester examination is but a trivial matter.

"Anyway..... this outfit is really hot." Ash complained.

He was adjusting his bow tie with his fingers.

Ash is in a palace-designed manservant uniform. The well made dark coat gave out an extra elegant feel.

"Don't you know that I also feel very hot too!!!"

On the other hand, Eco is also wearing maid attire which is also a palace design. It is exactly like the same ones Cosette wears daily. Even though she still looks kind of cute in the uniform, unfortunately her unnecessarily high self-esteem is at work, causing her mood to be ugly.

Needless to say, it is not Ash and Eco's intention to wear such clothes.

In fact, this was proposed by Cosette.

This was to avoid unwanted rumors when the two of them went back to Fontaine city accompanied by Princess Silvia.

Indeed, if the Princess were to travel back home, alone together with a male student, it would not be surprising if some rumors would be born from it. Moreover, it seemed that, the thing that attracts news reporters' curiosity most is the affairs of the palace's nobles. This is also the reason why Eco and Ash were disguised as servants.

As it happens, first bell sounds off at this time.

The students hurried out of their dormitories and rushed over to the school. This being an final exam day each student wears a terrible murderous expression.

"Fuwaa"

Eco yawned. She was still sleepy for getting up early and looked as if she was without any spirit. Even so, her shiny hair that reflects the morning rays was like a pink gem stone which gave her a divine like look.

"Err..... is Silvia not ready yet?"

"For Princess, it is like she is going back home. It should have been that she needed more time to pack up her stuff."

"What was that? She asks us out early in the morning but she is late herself? How could there be such a rude female animal!"



"Hey, how can you call Princess as a 'female animal'!"

Eco needs to take care of what and how she's going to speak before she causes trouble by uttering some nonsense in town... Ash secretly thought.

Part 2

A few moments after the bell rang, Lancelot glided down landing gracefully with Silvia and Cosette on its back.

"Sorry to keep you waiting."

Silvia had her blond hair tied and is wearing a dragsuit embroidered with the knight's royal insignia. She looks as if she is a mythological character.

Eco immediately lost her sleepiness and angrily shouted:

"Why are you so slow!! And what's with that costume? And you even made a prideful dragon wear a servant's clothing... What a disappointment!!!"

"Ara? I'm so sad. I had initially happily thought that it is a rare chance for me to be in the same attire as Eco..."

Cosette replied for Silvia. She covers her mouth with her hands and turns her face to avoid looking at Eco, and started sniffing.

"Wait... what is there worth crying about! That... You usually take care of me, and since we have the opportunity to wear the same clothes, I'm also glad about it..."

"Hehe. Thank you Eco."

Sure enough, Cosette, with a nonchalant look, was laughing.

"Wha... How dare you trick me!"

Eco immediately grew angry, but nothing more could be done.

"We are ready to take off. Both of you please come up!"

Under Silvia's command, the group finally departed.

Part 3

"Ash Blake and young dragon Eco... had left?" Anya coldly muttered.

Anya had coincidentally arrived at the dragon riding academy and saw Lancelot, and the rest, flying high up into the sky.

The rumors that Silvia will attend the Continental Congress—'Elysium', and that Ash and Eco who have gained the opportunity to meet with the Paladin—had long ago spread like wildfire.

And, naturally, this information had been passed to Anya.

All the intelligence received so far had been completely reported to Milgauss.

Milgauss, who had an abnormal interest in Eco, immediately launched his plan.

Using Fontaine City as its location, the combat strategy reformulation is well underway.

Anya will also then leave for Fontaine City.

But.... What confused her was why doesn't she have her usual motivation.

—Recently, there is something wrong with Milgauss...

The previous Milgauss usually obeyed his duty from the Empire's Army's Intelligence Department, and always calmly completed his task.

However, since he met with young dragon Eco, Milgauss seems to have changed into a different person.

The Milgauss of now, compared to helping the Empire's Army, feels increasingly like his actions are more in his own interests.

But Anya is inspired by Milgauss. Regardless of which country Milgauss defected to, she is prepared to follow him silently.

If it is so, her desire to look forward to the day Milgauss reveals his 'secret', is it regarded as an arrogant wish...?

"What am I thinking about!!" Anya harshly scolded herself.

She then walked towards the parking space for the dragon carriage. ^[11]

Part 4

"What is that...? This is the first time I seen such a huge city!"

The time has just passed noon, the time when the sun becomes stronger, Eco gives praise.

Fontaine City's spire gradually appeared at the other end of the Fotainia's vast plains^[12]. The scenery of the town surrounding the spire had just come into view.

"Be careful not to fall down."

Ash reminded Eco who is behind him.

Eco was touched by the scene in front and had loosened her grip on Ash's waist.

Speaking of waist, Silvia is holding the reins while controlling Lancelot right in front of Ash.

This is the third time in his whole life Ash rode with Sylvia.

Ash initially did not mind sitting at the rear, but before he mounted Lancelot, a smiling Cosette gave up her position as seconded to him.

On their way there, Silvia's hair has an aroma of roses which caused him to feel uneasy. As if the wind that had been blowing on his face is stained with Silvia's body fragrance.

To keep himself from thinking about Silvia's body fragrance, Ash carefully observed Fontaine City.

This metropolis is centered around the castle.

In the space above the urban areas, many Dragners acting as guards can be seen flying around.

This scene gave an unusual feeling of tension.

"Hey, Princess, does this city usually have so many Dragners?"

"No. It is because the Continental Congress is around the corner so security was reinforced."

"I see. Anyway... Why deliberately choose such a busy time to summon Eco and I? Ahh, I have no offense against the Paladin."

"Sorry... I do not want to talk about things regarding my father."

Because he felt such strong resistance, Ash abandoned his investigation.

At this time, the Draggers in charge of the security noticed Lancelot's arrival. They lined up in mid-air, uniformly and put on their salute pose.

"Thanks for your hard work!"

Silvia with a loud voice responded to those Draggers who respectfully saluted to her.

Part 5

The five-story Fontaine Palace stands right in the center of the capital. It is an old city that can be described with 'simple yet sturdy'.

A huge number of maids were gathered at the entrance to welcome the return of the Fourth Princess.

It is estimated that the number of maids is around thirty. They were divided into two rows, standing one at each side and gave a deep bow to Silvia. It is not surprising to have the palace musicians performing at this moment.

"Welcome back, Princess. The Paladin has been expecting you for a long time."

A maid wearing spectacles, representing the other maids, stood in front of Silvia.

"I would be of better use making the guests familiar with the palace..."
Silvia said reasonably.

After that she then turned her attention towards Ash and Eco, but...

"No. You must first greet the Paladin."

The bespectacled maid kept her stance and refused compromise.

"Haa... I understand."

After Silvia sighed but promised, she spoke to Ash:

"This is how it is. We will do our stuff separately for a while. If there are any questions, you can inquire anything from her— Florida."

Ash nodded in understanding. So Silvia, with an imperial imposing manner, marched towards the stairs at the inner part of the entrance hall. Cossette also followed Silvia.

Just after Silvia and Cossette climbed up the stairs and disappeared behind, the maids gathered around the hall dispersed to their various duties.

She is full of murderous intent.

"What's wrong with them...?"

Ash blankly murmured. Then, Florida, who was the only one left, walks towards them.

Florida is a head taller than Ash and, just because of this, Ash felt a huge amount of pressure. But hidden beneath the spectacles, the sharpness of her eyes were no less than a knight.

Just by being looked at by such a woman, it is not a wonder that Silvia will obey her... Ash can finally understand how she felt.

"My name is Florida Shelley. Both of you are Ash Blake-sama and Eco-sama the dragon, am I right? Your room has already been taken care of."

Florida, without a smile, led the two to their bedroom.

From the entrance hall to the corridor, the walls decorated with the works of well-known painters and sculptors. Among them, many of them were related to dragons or Draggers.

"That... Florida-san is seems that your Surname is Shelley, right? Could you be by any chance a relative of Cossette?"

Ash asked.

"Cossette is my cousin's sister. Does it have anything to do with you?"

"N-No... Sorry."

Once he was glowered at, Ash was trembling with fear. Her personality compared to the kind Cossette is like two different worlds.

Florida then continues to speak:

"Please forgive me for saying this; the Continental Congress Elysium will be held on the coming day. Currently the whole city is busy carrying out the preparatory work. Logically speaking, this is not really a suitable time to entertain guests like the both of you."

"Haha... I understand."

Since the other party had said this very straight forwardly, Ash can only smile bitterly.

However... Eco had a temper worse than Ash. She shook her pair of fists, and grumbled as if she was cursing:

"You really don't know how to say anything nice... it is not really a suitable time to entertain us? Why don't you ever think of why we came here from a faraway place—"

Ash quickly whispered to Eco:

"Please don't be mischievous while we're here in the city! I don't have that many lives..."

"Err... Since she has spoken cruelly to us... and yet you want me to just forget about it with just a smile?"

"What else can we do?"

"Eh-Hem!"

Seeing as Florida gave a cough, Ash quickly turned silence.

"Because I still have work to do, I don't have the time to entertain you both."

Florida continues to add fuel to the fire.

Ash, while covering Eco mouth, said: "Please don't trouble yourself. After we meet with the Paladin, we will immediately head home. After all, the Continental Congress has nothing to do with us."

"Your analysis is correct. Having said that, for not entertaining the guest, it is not a tradition of the Lautreamont family. Fortunately, Princess Veronica-sama has sent someone responsible to take care of you two. Please be rest assured."

"Huh? Princess Veronica-sama...?"

Ash sensed something that made him felt unease.

Florida stopped in front of a door along a corridor on the fourth floor.

"This is your room."

Just when Florida places her hand on the golden doorknob—

-Doong Toom

A strange noise can be heard from behind the door. The series of several loud thuds might make people suspect an avalanche is occurring.

"W-What has happened?"

Florida with a great change on her face changed, rushed into the room.

"Sorry ~!"

Upon entering, a young maid was crying in the middle of numerous books scattered on the floor.

"Prim-san...?"

Ash blankly muttering the maid's name.

The maid in front is Cosette's sister – Primrose Shelley. Logically speaking, she should be working on the airship Silvanus...

No, apart from that, the point is, why is Prim only wearing her underwear? The white underwear is bulging with a huge amount of flesh.

Just when Ash was staring at her cleavage-

"You idiot! Who allowed you to stare!"

Eco's severely elbowed his tummy.

"Urgh!"

"Prim! Why are you dressed like this?!"

Florida asked Prim.

"T-This is because... Every time I clean, I do not know why my clothes would get dirty... So I thought up a way to clean while being naked, such an action wouldn't get my clothes dirty!"

"It doesn't matter if our maid attire gets dirty! Besides, why would this room be in a mess?"

Books that were scattered on the ground. A bucket that was tipped. Water puddled on the floor. Littered rags. And the unnatural position of the carpets.

The room before it was cleaned, should have been cleaner. Ash thought.

Without waiting for the sniffing Prim to put on her clothes, Florida left the room.

"Prim is then responsible for taking care of Ash and Eco"- Which is the parting sentence that Florida said before she left.

To Florida, Ash and Eco's visit is only an additional burden for her. To put it bluntly; She just passed the trouble on to the useless Prim.

As for Veronica's involvement, who sent Prim here for support, things were not better off. Although, looking from the perspective that they already knew each other, it is not wrong to say that Prim is suitable for this job...

"Glad to have the opportunity to meet with you again, Ash-sama!"

Prim who finally put on her maid uniform leaned over. By smelling her fruity body smell, Ash heart starts to race.

Long-time no see, Prim-san."

"Who is this lady?... Don't tell me that you had a mistress without me knowing?"

Eco unhappily pinched his tummy.

"Where did you learn that word from? She is Primrose Shelley-san and is also Cosette's sister."

"Indeed... She does look like Cosette, but it seems that she is not a good maid."

"Uuuuu!"

Eco's criticism hits the bull's eye. Prim stepped back.

"Eco! Be careful of how you are speaking!"

"It does not matter... Ash-sama. It is true because my clumsy personality is an indisputable fact... Are you Eco?"

Prim looked excited, she is staring at Eco.

"W-What are you looking at...?"

Eco is stunned. Strictly speaking, she should have been overwhelmed by Prim's breasts. Her magnificent breasts were shaking roughly in front of Eco.

"Waa! You really have horns! Can I touch them?"

Like a child wanting to touch a small animal, Prim stretched out her hand towards Eco.

"Stop... of course you may not touch them!"

Eco immediately exposed her teeth while dodging.

Since a few days ago, when her weakness about 'by nibbling her horns she will become powerless' was exposed by Lukka, Eco is always on alert about people who were going to touch her horns.

"What is special about touching a horn! Quickly clean the room! What a mess it is in, I can't even rest and have a cup of tea!"

"Uuu... Sorry... I'll tidy up right away."

"Ah, it's better if I do the cleaning."

After hearing that Ash is going to help, Prim jumped up on the spot

"That is outrageous! For a maid to let a guest do the cleaning, it's worse than death!"

"No, it's not helping... I should say that I'll do all the work. Prim-san, please accompany Eco."

"Err, but..."

"Please!"

Seeing that Ash is insisting, Prim forcefully nodded.

Part 6

Ash, who was good at cleaning, spent less than thirty minutes to finish up. If it was given to Prim, most probably it will be until the sun sets.

Ash looked at the room again.

Indeed it is a guest room in the castle, all the furniture used were first-class goods.

Hung on the ceiling was a crystal chandelier inlaid with bright-dragon-crystal.

Even a heater, that is useless in the summer, was also placed in the room.

The room had two beds, which nearly made Ash burst in tears. Because normally, in the student dormitory, his bed is given to Eco. He could only place a futon on the ground.....

Eco who was looking at the scenery from the window, like a child suddenly cried out loud.

"Woah... Come and have a look!"

Because the room was located on the fourth floor, they were able to view the scenery around the capital.

Ash stood beside Eco, looked at the streets below.

The view, that he had only seen previously in pictures, is right in front of his eyes. The big churches, Opera Houses and other large facilities were all over the place. It's a special view that can only be seen in the capital.

"..."

Ash casually looked at Eco, sure enough, she obviously had an impatient look.

Even though she is also obviously taking a peek back at Ash, once their eyes met, she pretended to turn her head the other way. Anyhow, Ash had lived together with Eco for three months and he immediately knew what she is thinking.

Besides, since it is still early, they were not told to stay in their room...

"Do you want to have a look at the streets?"

Upon hearing Ash's proposal, Eco suddenly revealed a blooming flowers-like laugh, but she soon put away her smile with a stinking face and crossed her arms.

"Hmm... I don't really get what you are thinking. It doesn't matter whether I am going there or not, but if you really insist on going, I can consider accompanying you. But then, before that..."

"Before that?"

"I want to change my clothes! I've had enough of this maid attire!"

Eco started to roughly remove her maid uniform. Her smooth white shoulder, back and waist suddenly became visible.

"Uwaa! Don't do it so suddenly!"

Ash quickly turned to the right to avoid looking at Eco's naked body.

Part 7

In the king's hall, Paladin Oswald leaped from his throne, and made a perfect curve while flying towards Silvia.

"TCH... you are really annoying!"

Silvia's iron fist soon hit Oswald's round face.

"Ouch!"

Oswald spouts a nosebleed as he falls backwards.

The glorious Paladin's blood soon soaked into the red carpet.

"From the strength of your punch... you have grown up to be more and more like your mother."

Oswald slowly climbed up from the ground while saying it with emotion.

Silvia's mother- Queen Elizabeth was a famous Ark-Dragner during her lifetime. But, in the end she had lost to a disease.

Since the Queen had passed away when Silvia was three years old, she doesn't have a strong impression of her mother.

There is a huge portrait behind the throne. Her mother in the painting looks elegant, featuring a pair of vulture-like piercing eyes.

In Silvia's eyes, her mother was someone she admires. She hoped that she can be a woman like her mother one day.

However, different from her heroic mother, her father- Oswald... is nothing but a worthless person.

He was always with his smiling round face and his round body. Although he didn't imitate the past Paladins by forgoing a large beard, but even with kind words, he can't be considered good-looking.

These are just the small problems; the main thing is his mushroom-like hairstyle. Silvia really wanted him to have it changed. Even though he was quite satisfied with it, his daughter is really embarrassed by it.

Don't know whether it is unfortunate or lucky that Oswald hadn't been chosen by the Mother Dragon as a breeder.

"Come closer Sylvie, let me look at your beautiful face."

"I do not mind being looked at by you... but please do not come a step closer. You are filthy!"

"Uhoo! Even your style of scolding others is like Elizabeth's!"

Seeing Oswald blush, Silvia had had enough of him.

"Don't you have any sense of shame! Being overjoyed because of being scolded by your daughter... what nonsense is that!"

Part 8

After she forced her father back to his throne with her kick, Silvia asked seriously:

"What in the world made you summon me back home? I'm just an ordinary student and still studying. Why would you order me to attend the Continental Congress 'Elysium'...?"

"Why should you be so timid? You are the Fourth Princess and also a Dragner. Of course you are fully qualified to join the line-ups of the Lautreamont Knights country's leaders. Anyway, the person who recommended you isn't me, but Veronica."

"Anee-ue she...?"

Indeed this is an idea that only Veronica would think about, Silvia thought secretly.

She intends to make Silvia, who declared "I am determined to become the Paladin", to accumulate some experience regarding the royals.

If she can be involved in the Continental Congress 'Elysium' before she is twenty, she will get quite some valuable experience.

Of course Veronica would surely be attending as the First Princess. With the thought of going to greet Veronica later, Silvia is getting a headache.

"In short, as long as I can see Sylvie, I've no objection. That's why I simply just accepted Veronica's opinions."

"I see... Then about summoning Ash Blake and young dragon Eco in such a busy period, why did you do so?"

Even when he was gazed coldly by Silvia, Oswald remained calm. He just plays with the small beard below his chin with his fingers.

"Now is indeed a busy period, but Sylvie, you must have already known... I am just the Paladin by name. Most of the government tasks are handled by my excellent subordinates, the busier they are at work, the more leisurely I become."

Silvia is at loss for words.

"In other words... you just want to find someone to accompany you, no matter whom it is?"

"Well, that's true. I have heard about the rumors about Ash Blake and young dragon Eco."

Silvia lost her mind. This father is simply no different than a child, she thought.

Perhaps that he felt guilty after seeing Silvia's looks, Oswald like giving an excuse said:

"Of course it is not that simple. I also know of what Ash Blake has contributed. As a Paladin, I think there is a suitable reward for him."

"Suitable reward...? What is that?"

Silvia curiously asked, but Oswald only exposed a child-like naughty smile.

"Oh, tonight I'm going to entertain Ash Blake and Young Dragon Eco with a dinner. If you are interested, you may attend."

"I don't even want to know!"

Silvia's face is red and she wanted to immediately turn around and leave, but before that she came out with a question:

"... I also have one thing that I want to ask father."

"Huu! Feel free to ask."

Oswald who overly bored happily allowed it.

"I would like to ask something about Brother Julius."

Upon hearing that, Oswald expression instantly freezes.

Even cheerful Oswald, once he heard someone mention the name Julius, his face sank. Although Julius sentence was ten years ago, but that name until today is still considered taboo.

"Was Aniue^[13] really executed?"

"W-What are you talking about...? Sylvie? He was a Dragonslayer. Even though he was a prince, we mustn't spare him."

"I understand. I'm just curious..."

"In the future never mention such silly question, alright? There are things in this world that can be spoken off and things that cannot."

"...Yes."

Silvia with a serious expression promised and left the king's hall.

Cosette who was waiting in the hallway with a tactful tone asked her:

"What's the outcome?"

Silvia while walking faster, she replied:

"Once he heard me asking about aniue , chichiue's^[14] eyebrows gave a reaction. Whenever chichiue is lying, his left eyebrow would stir up—this is his sign."

Silvia clenched her fist and continued to say.

"I'm afraid that chichiue couldn't bear to kill aniue, but just had him exiled..."

Part 9

The first place Prim introduced to both Ash and Eco was the central square.

"Fontaine City's central square is a very well-known tourist attraction. On the right side, you can see St Rosa Maria's Cathedral. Beside it is the Fontaine National Opera House. On the left side you can also see the Ark-Dragner's Museum."

Prim is certainly not good at cleaning, but she could become quite a good tourist guide since she is a local.

"It's terrific... Terrific! This is the knight country's capital...!"

Eco ran lightly on the evenly spaced stone slabs.

She was wearing a hat that covered her horns. Although the water-colored sleeveless one-piece dress exposed some of her flesh, it was still very suitable for the young and lively Eco. Her legs, without her stockings, were stepping along on a pair of white sandals. This dress was specially bought, in the shopping streets in Ansarivan, for this trip.

"Eco, be careful not to get lost!"

Ash and Prim were quickly chasing after Eco's footsteps.

Even though it's daytime, on a weekday, the central square was still packed with people. There were shoppers, tourists and many innocent children running around.

Eco stopped in front of a flower garden. The inner part of it is full with flowers blooming under the summer sun. The flowerbeds were placed in layers, and there were a couple of bronze statues on the top most tier.

There were a set bronze statues depicting a knight and the king. The knight was kneeling with his head lowered. The king was wielding a unsheathed sword, placed lightly on the knight's shoulder.

"What is that statue?"

Prim answered Eco's childlike question while smiling:

"This group of bronze statues is a scene of the appointment ceremony. At the time, the Chevron king- Lionel III appointed Durham-sama as the first

Paladin. Later, the person who revitalized the Lautreamont knight country was Durham-sama himself."

"Oh... it sounds like it is full of history."

Eco was admiring the statue.

The date engraved on the base is year 864 November the third in the year of the Saint. Dating back about five hundred years.

Perhaps she was satisfied with the statue, Eco turned around and lazily stretched her waist.

"Nn~! The size of this place completely different from Ansarivan! I'm getting more and more excited!"

"After all, Ansarivan is just an academy city. I think it does not make any sense to compare the two."

After Ash gave his analysis, he was being stared at angrily by Eco.

"You really love to spoil the fun! Since it's rare for us to be in the capital, I want to totally forget about the Paladin and enjoy the fun!"

Eco majestically made a declaration and her red eyes were shining in splendor.

"Hey! How can we forget about the Paladin!"

Ash quickly corrected Eco.

Part 10

Eco was enjoying herself in the capital. Without realizing, the sun was setting.

"I think it is almost time for us to return to the castle?"

After Ash suggested, Eco refused to listen to him without any explanation.

"No. We haven't visited the shopping district!"

Eco ran forward, her dress swayed with the wind. According to Prim, it seems that following further along this alley, they will eventually arrive at the capital's largest shopping district.

"We don't really have a choice."

While Ash was smiling, Prim suddenly reached out and pulled his sleeve.

"Prim-san?"

"That, Ash-sama... I-I am exhausted... I am alright with staying right here and waiting for you to return."

Prim, with an exhausted look, stood beside the trees beside the streets. Her shoulders were moving up and down from her breathing... Because she was sweating her clothes were clinging to her skin and made her figure stand out very attractively.

After Ash averted his eyes from Prim, he thanked her.

"Prim-san, thank you. We will try to come back early. If any stranger starts a conversation with you, never follow him, okay?"

"I am not that innocent!"

Ash entered the shopping district with Prim protesting against him from behind. He was already scanning for Eco in the crowded area.

On both sides of the street are a row of buildings doing businesses.

Food, clothing, jewelery, books, groceries, furniture... there should be nothing that you can't buy here, right?- The wide variety of goods at this place will make others think so.

Apart from the shops, there were also a lot of street vendors. Every vendor was using every trick they knew to attract guests before they choose to visit other cafés or restaurants. The sweet aromatic smell was appreciated by Ash.

Unsurprisingly Eco, also attracted by the appetizing smell, was staring at one of the street vendors dazed. A middle-aged man can be seen cooking the crust of crepes on an iron grill.

"Hey, you still want to eat...?"

Ash spoke timidly behind Eco.

In fact, before they came here, they had already eaten cakes, apple pies and tea in a café.

"How can I be so careless! I had forgotten that I haven't eaten any crepes today. How can I actually commit such mistake! If I didn't taste any crepes here, it means that I have wasted my time in the capital... Don't you also think so?"

"What sort of nonsense is that!"

After Ash had finished commenting, Eco was already queing up at the back of the serving line. It seems that she had made up her mind and refused to leave.

"Haa... After you have eaten this, you are not allowed to buy any others, alright?"

Eco with a "hum~" she was humming a song and she did not answer.

"Having said that..."

Only just now did Ash realize that those who were lining up to buy crepes... most of them were couples. Some were holding hands, the others were hooking their arms and there were also people who were flirting.....

Eco, who also witnessed all that, turned around and asked Ash

"Haa... Why are they sticking together so intimately? And... Why do you envy them?"

"D-Did I have that expression?"

"You were like a hungry dog, or I can also say that you were like a caged pig."

"You really are mean!"

"Hey, you haven't told me why?"

"B-Because... they are couples."

After Ash shyly answered, Eco slightly blushed.

Although Eco is just a three month old young dragon, she had been living in the academy. Basically; she had a certain understanding about the concept of couples.

"I see..."

After Eco calmed down, a new customer had lined up behind Ash. Judging from their conversation, they seems to be a couple.

It is now evening and the sun is setting behind them, causing the couple's long shadow to be cast upon the stone slabs on the ground in front of them.

"...!"

The shadows of the two can be seen sticking closely together. Also, words such as "I love you", "my life is only for you" and other sweet and tender phrases for couples can be overheard.

"..."

Eco's attention was focused at the shadows, after a while she suddenly stretched out her right hand to Ash.

"... Eco?"

Eco turn to look at the side and snappily muttered:

"If it is just holding hands... I don't really mind it."

Ash was shocked. He didn't understand why Eco suddenly said that. Was it because she wanted to protest against the other couples, or she was just pitying Ash who envied the rest?

Anyway, Eco looked purer today. She was probably affected by the special atmosphere in the capital. It was like Eco was under the capital's magic.

"So... Let's do it."

Ash held Eco's hand as his heart beat increased. The moment their hands touched each other, Eco was startled. Her palm was smaller and softer than expected. Eco's body temperature was passed to Ash through her palm.

At this time, the couple behind them were fully immersed in their world.

From their shadows..... they were obviously kissing, and it was still quite an intense affectionate kiss. Their flirting had suddenly stopped at half-way- this gave them a deeper sense of reality.

"...!"

Eco seems to have also noticed the unusual circumstances behind. She was staring at the shadows on the ground for quite a moment.

"Y-You can only hold my hand! I-I will not allow any further development!"

Then she declared at Ash who was standing beside.

"I-I know that!"

Later, the two silently queued up.

In the eyes of others, are we like a pair of lovers... While feeling Eco's warm hand in his... Ash thought so.

Part 11

"Nn? It smells wonderful!"

On her right hand is a chocolate mint flavor while on her left hand is cream cheese and raspberry flavor. Today, it was a rare sight for Eco not to directly eat it, but start with smelling it.

"Be careful not to hit any passers-by."

Ash casually reminded her, but Eco abruptly looked up at him.

"Why didn't you buy anything?"

"I don't have a choice..... the price here is higher than Ansarivan. Even a crepe costs three hundred glorins^[15]."

"What... hearing you say this, am I being luxurious?"

"I'm not blaming you. Since it is rare for us to be in the capital, don't you worry about anything."

"... Take it."

Seeing Eco suddenly hand out her right hand's Crepe, Ash becomes confused.

"Eco?"

"You can only have a bite..."

The reason that Eco's face looked red... perhaps it was not just caused by the sunset.

"Can I... really?"

"Didn't you say that it was rare for us to be in the capital? If I am the only one enjoying... It doesn't feel right. You must also try to have some fun...!"

Ah... for her to be this kind, it must be the capital's magic responsible for it.

Until what extent will Eco act cute today?

"Then I'll take a bite... Nn! This is...!"

The chocolate's sweetness and the mint's refreshing feel gradually spread out in his mouth. The crust spread with cream is crunchy and soft.

"It's delicious! Really delicious! Eco, come and have a try!"

"Why are you exaggerating?"

Seeing Ash's teeth marks on the Crepe, Eco looked sad. But eventually temptation wins out and she straight away took out a big bite.

"Nn... What is it? This is the first time I ate such a delicious crepe!" Eco was excitedly shouting...

Just then... A huge object, passing not too far away and above the shopping street, slowly occluded the red and setting sun and cast its huge shadow over this area of the city.

Because of the sudden disappearance of the sun, everyone looked curiously upwards— then they involuntarily came out with a sounds of amazement.

Ash and Eco were no exception, they looked up at the sky dumbfounded.

An air carrier was floating in the sky.

The size is far bigger than Princess Veronica's airship Silvanus.

On the air carrier, there is a flag of the Zepharos Empire. On the other side of the flag there was a huge family crest that Ash had never seen before.

"Is it the Empire's nobles?"

Someone answered Ash.

"That's the Viderhausen family's coat of arms. I heard that the head of the Viderhausen family is going to represent the Empire in the scheduled Continental Congress."

Cosette suddenly appeared.

"Hehe, I'm here to pick up Ash-sama and Eco."

Ash was amazed.

She could even find them in this crowded city.

"... Pick us up? Why?"

"Because Ash-sama and Eco are going to join tonight's dinner."

"Dinner...?"

Seeing Ash muttering, Cosette suddenly straightened herself.

"The Paladin is expecting the both of you."

By judging this sentence alone, Ash finally understood the situation he was in. The Paladin had finally summoned him. Ash was surprised to have the honor to be invited to a dinner with the Paladin. Ash only expected that he would only get the chance to greet the Paladin in the throne room.

"Hehe. Princess will also be attending. No need to be nervous."

Hearing Cosette say this, Ash was relieved.

Although, with Silvia acting as a social bridge, it is hard to say that he need not be nervous.

"Let's go."

Lead by Cosette, Ash and Eco were on their way home.

Though Ash felt like he had forgotten some important event, his head was already full of tonight's dinner.

Part 12

Near the entrance to the shopping district, Prim was leaning by the trees eagerly looking forward for Ash and Eco's return.

Without realizing, it was already dusk and the pedestrians around gradually thinned out.

"Uoo~ how come the two of them are not back yet-! Uoo."

"Eco's Hioliday ~A.B.S.1365.7~" is closed.

Chapter 3 - Paladin Oswald

Part 1

Cosette led Eco and Ash to the dining room.

Ash is now wearing a formal suit. After they returned to the castle, Cosette forced him to change his clothing even after his protestations. The matching black suit, shirt, a silver tie, and she even produced a pair of polished shoes for him.

"Hum, hum, hum~..."

Eco on the other hand was dressed in a rose white dress, humming a song while walking, her entire body was covered with laces, flounces, gemstones and other matching accessories. Her hair was also combed in a mature style complimenting her dress. She now looked very much like a Princess.

But Eco had her attention placed on tonight's menu and questioned Cosette about it on their way there.

"Hey, is there any delicious meat?"

"Of course, the highest quality frozen beef is waiting to be served."

"What you just mentioned..... is it a Chevron cow?"

The sound that Eco made by swallowing her saliva can be heard clearly by Ash.

"Not only it is a Chevron cow, but I also heard that it has a blood relationship certificate of a heifer."

"..... What is a heifer?"

"Tee Hee. It means it had the same soft and tender meat as Eco."

Once again, Cosette unmasked a playful smile and then pinched Eco's upper arm. Eco quickly dodged aside and her whole face was already red.

"C-Could you be..... eying my flesh?"

"Well, what do you think? Hee hee....."

Ash smiled at the teasing argument. After a long walk, they finally came to an open space.

It seems to be a lounge with impressively high ceilings.

Cylindrical pillars were arranged along the walls. In the middle of the room were sofas and chairs. The fireplace was visible from the front of the room.

There are doors on each side of the fireplace. Behind the doors should be the dining room.

"I beg your pardon for asking you to meet with my father's unreasonable demands."

From Ash's point of view, there seems to be a pale blue flower blooming in the shadows of a pillar. Silvia, who arrived first, quietly stood up from her chair.

"Princess.....!"

Ash was fascinated with Silvia's ice blue colored dress.

The cold colored clothes made her blond hair and white skin even more dazzling. Standing in front of him was a person—who usually hid behind her usual strict and arrogant attitude at school, but was now—presenting herself in a more regal manner.

"Huu? Anything wrong with you, Ash?"

Silvia was confused.

"Nothing, but..... I think that you are beautiful."

"Wha!"

Like a volcanic eruption, Silvia's cheeks immediately flushed. She silently and shyly faces downwards.

"Hey....."

At this moment, Ash sensed a murderous intent rapidly arising from behind. Ash nervously glanced back and saw Eco angrily walking towards him.

"When I had put on my dress you didn't even say a word of praise!"

"Y-You are of course also very beautiful."

"To say those hypocritical words right now, I won't even be happy about it!"

Eco snappily looked aside to ignore Ash and she took a glance at Silvia's chest.

"Hmph..... I understand. In the end you still like female animals with big boobs! You like those that feel soft and very elastic when touched, right!"

"I had never said such thing! Why do you need to bring up that topic!"

Ash had also gotten angry.

"Boo hoo ~! I had finally found you!"

At this time, the sound of crying had broke the tension.

"Ash-sama and Eco..... how could you even... silently sneak back home!"

Prim was running back while breathing heavily. Not only are her eyes were red and swollen, she is also breathless.

"Oh god.....!"

Ash then remembered the stuff that he had totally forgotten. That's right, right before they entered the mall, they left Prim beside the trees next to the street.

"I'm sorry, Prim-san!"

Ash was sincerely apologizing to her by bowing down. Seeing Prim's crying face, even Eco is affected.

"I'm sorry"

Although Eco was still angry, at least she gave a verbal apology.

Only then Ash found out the situation they were in before Prim came into the picture had completely disappeared.

Cosette said to the sobbing Prim while smiling: (!)

"Prim-oneesan is really amazing. You had cleverly grasped the timing for your appearance."

Upon hearing this, Prim only replied with a confused expression.

"Hoh? So you're that famous Ash? Hmm, you look talented! So the one beside should be Eco, right? Wow! You really do have horns! It's amazing!"

To Ash's surprise, Paladin Oswald was a person who was readily approachable. Logically speaking, he should have been entering his old age, but his round face still looked very smooth and shiny.

"It should be very tiring for you to come all the way here from afar. Well, well, no need to be so polite, make yourself at home."

There were only the four of them attending such an amazingly long dining room table. Cosette and Prim were standing behind Silvia and Ash looking solemn

On the other hand, behind Oswald, there's a maid who was wearing spectacles. She is Florida.

After they finish their prayer to the Virgin, the dinner officially began. The first course was soup.

Because Ash was overly nervous... the taste of what he is eating was almost completely lost.

At the same time, Eco, who is beside Ash, placed her plate on the table with a loud bang.

"The soup is not bad, but is the meat done yet?"

Eco didn't use her spoon and directly finished the soup in one go. On her nose and mouth whitish soup stains could be seen.

"Uwaa, Eco!"

Prim quickly helped Eco to wipe her face with a napkin.

"Eco! You are being rude!"

Ash was sweating.

"Ha ha! Don't worry. There is no need to impose human etiquette on a girl who is a dragon."

Oswald gave a laugh and ordered Florida who was behind:

"It seems that Eco-san is not satisfied with this style of eating. Go and tell the chef, serve all the food that has been prepared right away."

"Yes, sir."

With a serious look, Florida marched off toward the kitchens.

"Hmmm, I was asking myself what kind of pretentious person the Paladin would be, but I didn't expect that you to be quite friendly. I like you!"

Eco put on her egoistic manner of speaking.

"To be appreciated by a dragon girl, I am very proud. I must enjoy the night."

"Father..... Look at you, even the Paladin title is going to be in tears. Can't you display a little of a ruler's dignity?"

Silvia unhappily complained to Oswald. Without knowing whether she had no appetite or she was silently protesting, she just sipped a mouthful of the soup and put her spoon aside.

"What are you talking about? If not for the dragons, I'm afraid this continent would have long been dominated by the Empire. For me to respect Eco-san isn't anything other than proper. Ha ha ha!"

After Oswald let out a laugh with a loud voice, the waiters, one by one, brought out various cuisines and wine bottles.

"This fried steak is made from the Chevron's heifer."

A waiter said, while placing a plate in front of Eco.

"Waa.....!"

In front of the thickly cut steak, Eco's eyes brightened. Without using the knife, she took a fork, directly stabbed and lifted a slice of meat, and then swiped a huge juicy bite out of it.

"Nn.....!"

The next moment, Eco reacted as if she were shocked by electricity and her body twitched. After biting into the thick cut of meat, she didn't move an inch.

"Hey are you alright?"

Does it not suit Eco's taste? After Ash questioned her, Eco suddenly relaxed the muscles of her body.

"Oooh..... I'm so happy ~"

Ash smiled. She should have been overjoyed. She is almost over the moon.

"Hehe..... She is still the same old Eco."

Silvia who was glum before also smiled softly. It was probably because of Eco's innocent reactions that she was able to forget about her anger.

Fortunately, after seeing Silvia smile, Ash also felt released from the tension.

Part 3

Silvia while sipping on her drink, quietly watched Ash.

- In all fairness, this scene is unexpected.....

In the recent months, Ash had quite an incredible performance, to be able to receive father's praise is really what he deserved.

But for a student, who is also a normal civilian, to be invited into the castle to have a meal with the Paladin on the same table is really strange.

At the same time Silvia bears these feelings, Oswald finally smiles while asking Ash some questions..

About Eco's birth.

About the Ark that Eco created.

About the battle that occurred in Ansarivan and Willingham Mausoleum..... and so on.

Ash seems to have expected that he would be asked these questions, and his answers to them were orderly.

Also, the formal suit gave a bonus effect, Ash looked incredibly manly tonight. Gradually..... Silvia's cheeks became hot.

- W-What's wrong with me? Why is it that every time I look at Ash..... my feelings become so complicated?

Her true feelings, from the unsettled depths of her heart, were only trying to express themselves.

And these strange thoughts made her confused.

"If not for you and Eco-san, Ansarivan, the training camp at Allonnes lakeside and the Willingham Mausoleum may have been razed to the ground. I thank you for all this."

Oswald gave a bow.

As a king of a country, he even actually bowed to a normal citizen.

"..... Father?"

Silvia immediately came back to her sense and stared at Oswald.

"Uwaa! Please stop bowing! I can't afford to have it!"

Ash was frightened. He quickly stood up in order to avoid letting Oswald stand alone.

However, the real shock is yet to come.

The declaration that Oswald made after he raised his head was beyond Silvia's imagination.

"So, starting today, you're a Dragner."

"Thank you-..... Hu! I am a Dragner?"

"What is there to be surprised about? For this sole purpose, I summoned you to this city."

Oswald looked calm.

At that moment, Silvia realized what Oswald meant by saying, "As a Paladin, I think there is a suitable reward for him", when she returned to the castle.

Silvia thought to herself.

- How unfathomable is Ash's development?

Eco was just born three months ago. Logically speaking there was still a great deal of room for her to grow.

When Eco reaches her adulthood, how powerful a Dragner would Ash become.....? Silvia couldn't even imagine.

The only certainty is that— In Lautreamont Knight country, even a civilian, as long as he can get the Dragner's title, will become highly respected. If he can continue to become an Ark-Dragner, he could even gain the same status as a noble. Through this method, a wedding with one of the royals is no longer a dream.....

- M-Married? W-What am I thinking about!

"Are you alright, Princess? Your face is red."

Cosette casually whispered from behind, which made Silvia panic.

"N-Nothing!"

After all, Oswald was also present, so Cosette did not continue to pursue this behavior any further.

Part 4

-Starting today, you're a Dragner. Ash suspected he might have misheard what Oswald had said.

"But..... isn't it only a Maestro's rider who's qualified for the Dragner's title?"

"Ash, I'll ask you. Do you dare to say that Eco-san is not a Maestro?"

Oswald glanced at Eco. Even under this tense situation Eco was still happily eating without even bothering the others.

"I....."

Ash was speechless.

Because Eco's appearance was always in the form of a girl, in the end Ash was clueless about what kind of dragon she might be.

The only clue was the title "Avalon's Imperial Princess".

"As the Paladin, it is my obligation to give you a reward for your accomplishments. I don't deny that this has never happened in the past, but since I had already decided on the matter, from this day onwards you are a Dragner. Florida, prepare the item."

"Yes, sir."

The statue-like Florida suddenly moved.

Without Ash noticing, Florida was now holding a plate in both hands. Placed on the plate was a pocket watch engraved with the Knights' royal family's crest.

"I, in the name of Paladin Oswald, appoint Ash Blake as a Dragner."

"At your majesty's service."

Ash knelt on the spot and respectfully took the silver watch.

"The Continental Congress is around the corner, the city is now busy at the moment..... the official appointment ceremony will be held separately, please accept the silver watch and bear with it for a few more days."

"I-It's my pleasure!"

The words 'appointment ceremony' made Ash shudder. And in his mind, the image of the two statues previously seen in the central square—Chevron's King Lionel III and the first generation Paladin, Paladin Durham—naturally entered his thoughts.

Part 5

When the dessert was served, Silvia suddenly remembered something and blurted:

"Chichiue, I have heard that the Zepharos Empire's emperor will not attend the Continental Congress. Is this true?"

"Hmm. He turned down the invitation because of old age. Actually, elderly Ortofon VIII ^[16] is already 80 years old..... the problem is that he even refused to send a prince or a princess to represent him. Their way of doing things is somewhat disagreeable....."

"Who did the Emperor choose to be his representative?"

"I heard that it is the head of the Viderhausen house. Since ancient times they have been the barons and warlords for the Vandenhaar borders for generations."

While listening to the Silvia's and Oswald's talk, Ash pictured the continent's map.

Vandenhaar is a land of the empire. It is located on the other side of the mountains and it is near the Lautreamont Knights Country.

"To actually allow an ordinary noble to represent the emperor..... they are a little too arrogant! It seems that the Empire has not yet given up the fight to take over the continent. The Necromancia is also probably their—"

At this time, Oswald with his rarely seen father's attitude, scolded Silvia.

"Silence Sylvie. There are some things that cannot be spoken of. The other party indeed is very suspicious, but our main priority is to communicate. Whatever it is, we cannot let the tragedy of the Xenoglavia's War repeat itself. The Continental congress 'Elysium' was created solely for this purpose."

"..... What you are saying is correct."

Silvia nodded seriously. It seems that she was reminding herself not to be careless the next time.

Then, like wanting to sweep away this tense atmosphere, Oswald smiled.

"Right! About tomorrow's masquerade I would like to invite Ash and Eco-san to join. What do you think about it?"

"What is that? How does it taste?"

Eco asked, while touching her bulging belly.

Masquerade? This was also the first time Ash heard about this topic.

"Hmm..... You all don't know? Tomorrow night's masquerade is organized to cordially promote national relations."

"Tomorrow? I remember that the Continental Congress will be held the day after tomorrow, right?"

Oswald nodded while answering Ash's question.

"That's right. In other words, this ball is like a prelude before the congress. Even though the congress only allows the leaders of each country to attend, it is different for the ball. Every person, together with their leaders, is eligible to participate."

"But why do you need to hold the masquerade? A mask is meant to cover your face. No?"

"It was arranged so that the participants would eliminate the gap between countries. To put it bluntly, the mask is a tool to help us to express ourselves."

"I see..."

Ash certainly understand the reasons for organizing the masquerade. But was it really ok for himself and Eco to attend such event? After all, it is a party meant for VIPs of all countries. He had the feeling they'd be out of place.

Silvia probably noticed Ash's concerns, so she gave him a boost.

"You and Eco are close to me, so of course you are eligible to participate."

"Princess must also be participating, right?"

"Yeah..... basically."

From her answer, it seems that Silvia is not at all excited about the ball. Compared to those kinds of gorgeous balls, it's presumable that she would be more interested in riding Lancelot and soaring high in the sky.

"Eco, have you decided?"

Ash tried to seek Eco's views.

"As long as there is meat, I don't think that there is anything bad by attending."

After he heard his expected answer, Ash smiled.

"Then it's decided! Please enjoy tomorrow's ball! Anyway, Ash..... there is one thing that I would like to confirm with you clearly."

Oswald suddenly leaned forward.

"Wh-What is it?"

Oswald's eyes were now emitting a very serious feel. 'So this person can also display a such a serious side'..... Ash thought rudely.

"I'm thinking..... You still haven't had any impure relationship with Silvia, have you?"

".....Hu?"

"Veronica is also very worried about your relationship with Sylvie."

"Chichiue! What nonsense are you talki..."

Silvia, whose face was already red, was trying to refute, but.....

"Silence!" Oswald gave a loud shout, like a raging thunder god.

Silvia didn't even dare mutter a single sound. Indeed, he is the one whose title is Paladin, so being able to display such a forceful attitude was expected.....

"Ash, you must know this clearly. I'm really grateful for your help, but you must not confuse it as permission to begin a love affair."

"Err"

"If you dare put your claws on Silvia..... I, Oswald swear, that I will personally sanction you! Do you dare to swear? Swear that you'll never touch my Sylvie by even a single hair?"

The fat round face is pushed in front of Ash was menacing and forced him to answer. It was simply torture.

"I swear, I'll swear no matter what.....!"

Ash, who lost under Oswald's pressure, screamed out loud.

"Princess and I..... Are not in a relationship!

"..... Do you really mean it?"

"Please, please believe in me! Princess please also help explain the situation!"

The only one in this world who is able to stop her father's jealousy was Silvia. Ash was likely hoping to seize that last hope, looked at Silvia for help, but—

"....."

Silvia's face somehow looked a little guilty, and she quickly averted her sight.

"You are the Dragoner! ~A.B.S.1365.7~" is closed.

Chapter 4 - Beowolf's conspiracy

Part 1

Anya, who also traveled to the Lautreamont capital city of Fontain, met with Milgauss as she had originally planned.

Since last month, they had not met for an extended time. However, today, Milgauss doesn't seem to be quite right.

Although his true face is still covered with the same silver mask, he wrapped a dark cloak around his body even on this hot summer day.

Ignoring Anya's questions he said. "..Come with me."

Milgauss then led her down numerous back alleyways. They kept hidden, with the use of an underground secret passage, sneaking past Fontain city's stronghold.

Along the way they were not bothered by any guards, even when it should be a period of martial law.

Anya was thinking while walking along the passage.

- What connection does Milgauss have with the Knight Countries....? A mere peasant wouldn't know the existence of this underground secret passage.....

In fact, let alone the public, there ain't even a single guard here. Is this a passage used by the royals to seek refuge.....? Anya thought of this possibility.

If it is so, why does Milgauss know the existence of such a route?

"We are going to climb upwards."

After hearing Milgauss's whisper, Anya cast aside all the distractions. There is a stone staircase in front of them.

Anya stared after she had reached the surface from the underground secret passage.

She is at an apron specifically for the use of landing and docking aviation ships.

The first ship that greets her eyes is the Zepharos mega airship—
Beowulf's Bow.

As for Chevron's airship Crown Solas, Holy Espada Agency's shrine ship Esperanza and Lautreamont's airship Silvanus, are lined up together side by side at some distance away from Beowulf.

It is as if Beowulf had been isolated.

On the other hand, at the other end of the apron, Fontain city stands majestically in the night full of lights.

After Milgauss gave a glance at a castle, he silently headed towards Beowulf.

Part 2

Inside the Beowulf- Milgauss and Anya came to a room where it was labeled "war room" in the Empire's language. After entering the room, a young noble stepped forward to greet them.

"Phew..... I had waited a long time for you, Milgauss."

The young guy's hair is blonde and he had a pair of gray eyes. He is such a beautiful guy^[17] that someone will mistake him for a chick.

At the same time, he can be seen as someone who practiced martial arts. Despite his slender body being wrapped in overly decorated clothing, his lean physique can still be seen.

- This man is Klaus, Vandenhaar's border's baron....!

She had once heard about this man's deeds before. Now, this being the first time she saw him, Anya gasped in his presence.

He is the head of the Viderhausen family and also the ruler of the Vandenhaar. At the same time, he is also the patron for Milgauss. Even though he was still a young man in his twenties, but he is now at the same level as an officer in the Empire's army.

Not only that, this time, he is also preparing to attend as an agent for the Zepharos Emperor in the Continental Congress 'Elysium'...

"Ah! My Milgauss! You really came!"...

Klaus placed his glass on his table, stood up and hugged Milgauss.

- What....! T-Two men hugging together! Or..... is it normally used in the Empire as a greeting?

Anya who stood by the door blushed.

"Well, this room is really...! ...filled with steel and greasy smells. Can you even imagine how I feel while I was waiting for you? What took you so long?"

"I was forced to, since the Continental Congress is around the corner. The security outside is very tight. I had to wait until nighttime to make my move."

"Hmm, you're also right."

After Klaus released Milgauss, he spoke while smiling.

"I'll first hand your new left arm to you."

Klaus pointed at the steel box on the table.

"This is the latest model sent from the Empire. Its strength is enough to even match a chariot."

"I'm really grateful for it."

After Milgauss thanked him, he placed his hand on the box.

A heavy metal sound can be heard when he opened the box.

Regardless of how you look at it, the object in the box is a 'human arm'.

"Hik..."

Anya almost screamed and she quickly covered her mouth. With a closer look, at the end of the arm, there is an electro-mechanical-like object.

—Mechanical..... prosthesis?

Klaus for the first time looked at Anya who was holding her breath.

"Are you the girl from the Tantalos tribe? I have heard about you."

"Y-Yes! I'm Anya, leader of the Tantalos tribe."

Anya stood at her spot and nervously replied. After all, he is Milgauss's patron and she shouldn't be rude.

"Hmm. From the surprised reaction, about Milgauss's left arm, it seems that you are still in the dark."

"Left arm?"

Anya was puzzled.

She happened to catch a glimpse of Milgauss throwing off his cloak on the floor from the corner of her eyes.

"...!"

Anya's eyes widened.

Milgauss's left arm is without its lower half starting from his elbow.

The long empty sleeve was swinging. Anya then realized why Milgauss felt he had to cover his upper body with the cloak.

"It happened ten years before. A guy who had lost his name, status, fame, and his left arm strayed into our home territory. He, who had committed major taboo in his homeland, was cursed—"

"Cut the crap, Klaus."

Klaus's story came to a halt when Milgauss scolded. Anya was a little disappointed. With just a little bit more, she might have found out more of Milgauss's past.

"Oh, I'm asked to stop. It's a pity, right?"

"N-No... Nothing."

Anya felt embarrassed. She felt that she cannot hide anything when being watched by Klaus.

"By the way, ojou-san, your muffler is really special, is that part of your folk costume?"

A sudden change of topic stunned Anya.

Regardless of what season Anya always has the muffler with her, as if it was part of her body. When she removed the muffler to disguise herself as

a town girl or a waitress, the empty feeling around her neck made her felt insecure.

"Yes, in the mountains, there is a custom where different clans exchange their children to conclude a peace agreement. When I was given to another clan when I was a child, I already had this scarf.... In other words, this muffler is a proof of which clan I was born in."

"Hmm, I am always madly in love with beautiful things. Beauty can overcome anything, do you not think so? I kept Milgauss by my side just because of this reason."

"Err....."

Anya was dumbfounded. What is this person actually talking about?

"Ahh..... What is there to be dumbfounded of. Your muffler is very unique and really beautiful-"

"You have gone off topic Klaus, quickly take out the device."

Milgauss who had turned around and faced them had put on his prosthesis arm.

Part 3

Klaus led Milgauss and Anya to the armory. Anya thought that would look like a warehouse. When the elevator doors opened, she was shocked.

The wide armory was located at the back of the ship. It was even big enough to rival the city hall.

This place was supposed to be designed to park the combat-aviation-ship's armored vehicles and also for storing ammunition. But there were no weapon-like objects that could be seen.

However, deep in the armory, there was a machine that looks like an 'infidel's altar'.

"That is..."

After walking over, A streamlined-shaped container was fixed above Anya. It was about ten meters above the ground.

It looked like a single-seater aviation ship's cockpit, but its exterior was beautifully decorated. Normal weapons simply cannot be compared with it.

However even though it had a god like beauty, there is still a dark feeling lurking from inside. When carefully observed, it seems more like a coffin and gave off a chilling feeling.

There were many cables hanging from the bottom of the capsule which most connected to a single mechanical device on the ground.

Looking at the whole picture, the huge device can even match with an adult dragon. The side of its body was studded with numerous large pieces of Bright Dragon Crystal.

- This is a magic guided device....!

At the same time Anya gasped, Klaus talked to her:

"Have you found out about it, ojou-san? This is the same type of device as with Milgauss's 'Tyrfing'."

When she heard the word 'Tyrfing' Anya was still wondering about it, but soon remembered... 'Tyrfing' should be the huge sword that Milgauss used when summoning the Necromancia.

Klaus walked to the side of the huge device.

"Thanks for your hard work."

Right now there were a few researchers close the device as well as ten or so other technicians were working elsewhere in the otherwise empty armory. The researchers were dressed in white robes, while the technicians were dressed in work clothes.

"It is rare for Klaus-sama to come personally..."

An old man who was thought to be the leader bowed respectfully.

"Yo, Dr. Hoffman. How is the progress?"

"As you can see, the assembly work is almost finished. We have now entered the final inspection stage. It is just that..... Since that device runs with the Millenium as a power source, you must be careful with it. Final inspection is bound to finish sometime during night."

Anya wondered if she heard it wrong. The Millennium— a rare mineral which was formed when the body of a dead dragon was buried in the ground for a few thousand years. The vast majority of it was used as the fuel for Airships.

"After the inspection period ends, the experiments can be carried out tomorrow afternoon. Alternatively, if my lord can help prepare the experimental material, then...."

After listening to Dr. Hoffman's report. Klaus revealed a satisfied smile.

"No problem, we will help prepare the experimental material. Please continue with the operations."

"Of course, Klaus-sama."

After Dr. Hoffman bowed again, he returned to the device.

Klaus again looked at the device with an attitude of reverence.

"It was a beauty unto the extent where it cannot be described... The ancient civilizations' skills were really amazing. It felt like it was far beyond the scope of a human's capabilities. Hey, Milgauss, come here and have a look too."

Milgauss silently walked forward and stopped beside Klaus's shoulder.

Klaus was in a trance.

"Magic guided device 'Yggdrasil'.... I chose its name. Do you not think that this name suits it well?"

Contrary to Klaus, Milgauss answered coldly.

"The name doesn't matter. The problem is whether it can be used or not."

"Hehe. That answer really suits your style. Frankly speaking, in the past, when this device was unearthed from 'Xonotone Ark'^[18], no one knew its true purpose. When Beowulf's engine was excavated, the empire's nobles were all excited. But nobody was interested in 'Yggdrasil'. Thanks to this, I bought it for a cheap price."

"How can those guys understand the true value of this device."

"Haha, you're quite ruthless. Anyway, I'm surprised by your knowledge! Because you had only read the limited information in the reports you still

knew of 'Yggdrasil's' nature immediately. But I personally still doubt it. With this device.... can we really force young dragon Eco to be awakened?"

"—!"

Anya, who overheard Milgauss and Klaus's conversation from behind, shuddered.

After listening to Klaus, Anya only understands the contents of her mission. In fact, Milgauss hadn't even told her about her mission yet.

—Is the prey, that is going to be put in the capsule.... young dragon Eco? Anya felt her spine freeze.

She remembered Eco's big innocent smile, while eating meat in the students' restaurant, which surfaced in her mind. At least, as far what Anya knows, Eco... is only a naive and gluttonous little girl.

Although her temper is bad, she is still a young dragon born only a few months ago. She was also welcomed, by a lot of the students, as a mascot of the student council.

It is difficult for her to link Eco and such a dark experimental device together!

—Why is Milgauss-sama so persistent about young dragon Eco? He even makes use of the Continental Congress.... The value of the little dragon girl... Is it worth the risk to make this barbaric move?

Casting aside Anya's obvious distrust, Milgauss and Klaus continued to talk.

"You don't have to bother with this so much, Klaus. You just need to have faith in me."

"Wow. What confidence."

"As long as you follow what I say, it is just a matter of time when you will gain control of the dragon's power. Even the next Emperor's throne is at your fingertips."

Next Emperor- These unexpected words tighten Anya's facial muscles.

"I'll be waiting for the day when your promise comes true, Milgauss. So then, Ojou-san."

Anya was shocked by Klaus who suddenly turned his attention back to her. Klaus's handsome face, just moments before, was now like a ghost.

"By hearing our conversation just now, you should know what your mission is ... Right?"

"Capture.... young dragon Eco?"

"Correct answer. Milgauss... you have a very good underling."

Despite being praised, Anya was not quite happy.

"The Melancholy of Anya ~A.S.S.1365.7~" is closed.

Chapter 5 - Mordred's tombstone

Part 1

- Stop it! Please stop...!

Ansarivan, the academy city, was destroyed right in front of Silvia.

It was an act of utter destruction.

In St Durham square, a place for the public to rest, there is a huge –gray–beast the Necromancia attacked with a crazed like fervor.

For every step the Necromancia made the buildings collapsed fragily like logs.

Silvia's legs felt weak and slumped to the ground.

"Princess, please pull yourself together!"

Even when Ash was shouting by her side, Silvia was scared and did not respond.

- Aaa..... a dream?

Silvia was looking at the past events from up high. She felt ghostly.

- How embarrassing for me to actually become paralyzed while sitting on the ground.....

Silvia high up in the air felt that 'useless' is the only word that can be used to describe herself.

How useless I am, no wonder Ash scolded me.

"What are you joking about..... what sort of princess are you! Which royal knight family are you from! If you really are an excellent royalist, then prove it to us!"

Ash lifted his right hand.

"Sorry but no offense!"

Just like what she remembered, Ash slapped Silvia in the face.

Thanks to that ruthless blow, Silvia manage to escape from the shackles of fear, and was determined to fight side by side with Ash.

Even though that incident had happened just a few months ago, it already felt like it had been years past.

She has a feeling that it's probably because she had lived her life to the fullest for the past few months. Furthermore, after the birth of Eco, there were many changes in her academy life that had happened.

-Why is it so?

Silvia suddenly felt something was not right.

From this perspective, when she was looking at the Necromancia, she felt something.

-I recognize the Necromancia? How could.....

Logically speaking, this is the first time Silvia witnessed such a creepy monster.

In fact, she had never seen such a large, black haired dragon in her entire life.

However, Silvia now felt that the Necromancia looked very familiar.

-Could it be!

Silvia have an idea

Once she had figured it out, she was thinking that how could she be this slow.

- Is it Mordred!?

Mordred was brother Julius's Pal, but was personally killed by Julius.

- Yes! That face and actions..... indeed they look like Mordred's! I was too careless, how could I not realize it earlier!

Part 2

The morning of the fifteenth day of the month of cancer.

"Mordred!"

I had finally discovered a crucial clue! Silvia, at the same time, jumped out from her bed.

"Er... I'm at...?"

Silvia did not feel quite right.

The scenery in front of her eyes was not the familiar ceilings of the Epona's house.

After she looked around again, Silvia finally remembered....

"I had forgotten...."

...This is Silvia's bedroom in Fontaine City. Silvia was lying down, on a bed with a covered top, and surrounded by luxurious curtains.

"Are you awake, Princess?" Cosette prompted.

Cosette, who was waiting in the room, slowly pulled back the bed curtains. Silvia felt relieved after she saw her gentle smile.

"Morning, Cosette."

"Good morning, princess. Just now, I thought I heard you shouting a guy's name.... Even when you have secretly promised yourself to Ash-sama, yet you are still thinking of another person. I felt contempt with princess's unfaithful behavior."

Unfortunately, these few words from Cosette had disrupted Silvia's calm mood.

"N-Nonsense! Mordred is a dragon's name!"

"Hehehe, just kidding, but you did not actually deny the sentence "secretly promised yourself to Ash-sama"."

Silvia's cheeks suddenly became hot.

"It is nothing like that! It is because there were so many aspects for me to comment on, I had just forgotten about it!"

"Then I'll try to believe that what you were saying was the truth. Hehehe."

After Cosette purposely laughed, she pulled back the entire curtains of the bed. Then she walked towards the window and pulled back the curtains covering the windows.

The next moment... Glaring rays of morning sunlight flooded into the room.

Silvia, getting down from her bed, spoke behind Cosette:

"Hey, Cosette. Before breakfast, I would like to visit someplace first."

Cosette smiles while answering.

"It is my responsibility to take care of Princess. I will be happy to follow Princess even to both ends of earth."

Part 3

Not many people can be seen early in the morning in the Fontaine city's town center.

The shops also seem to be closed today. A empty street full of a light cooling breeze, suits this late spring season well.

Silvia put on the dragon riding hat to shade her eyes and she also wore her nondescript academy uniform.

By just seeing Silvia's attire no one on the street should be able to figure out that she is the fourth princess. In direct contrast to that Cosette, following right behind her, who is wearing Royal maid attire and looked a lot more striking.

There are occasions where the watchmen will approached them for a safety check, but as long as Silvia lifts her hat to expose her face—

"Aren't you Princess! I'm sorry for bothering you!"

Everyone without exception will apologize while bowing and then immediately buzz off.

Later, Silvia arrived at the mausoleum area at the west side of the city.

This is not a common mausoleum, but a special one that is used as a graveyard for the dragons.

There were two guards on duty at the entrance to the mausoleum.

"...?"

Silvia was confused.

There were never any guards in this area. There isn't anything that's worthy to be stolen by thieves in this mausoleum.

"Princess? Why would you come to this type of place?"

The two guards, reacting just same as the previous watchmen, allowed Silvia and Cosette to enter the mausoleum.

"Lets go, Cosette."

"Yes, Princess."

Silvia decisively stormed into the mausoleum.

It is said that Mordred's ashes were placed in the underground of this mausoleum. Perhaps the reason Paladin Oswald did so was to bury the name Mordred along with its ashes.

After walking for some time down the stone stairs, Silvia arrived at her destination.

Unexpectedly, there were already visitors at Mordred's tomb.

A woman in armour.

Who was accompanied by a thin and tall knight and...

A woman the height of a child.

There was also a basilisk standing behind the small sized woman. Even though a Basilisk is said to be of the same species as an Asia it looks quite a bit different. It is a beast with the appearance of a lizard.

If it is possible, Silvia wouldn't want to meet with the three people and the beast. That's because there's always trouble whenever she meets them.

"Ane-ue! And also... Glenn-dono and Avdocha-dono!"

Upon hearing Silvia's greeting, the three of them turned their heads back at the same time.

Veronica was the first to speak among the three.

"Aren't you Silvia! Why do you come to this place?"

Veronica eyes were as cold as they used to be, like an eagle who found its prey. Even though Silvia trembled, she still replied calmly.

"I'm here because I remembered something. Ane-ue why are you here? Anyway... let alone Glenn-dono, why would Avdocha-dono also be here?"

"What! Are you not satisfied that we are together? Do you want me to tear your clothes into two again? Do you want to show that pair of cow like breasts in front of your ex-fiancé?..."

"Ouch!"

Veronica, without any warning, knocked Avdocha's head with her Gauntlets on, which made her cry in pain with tears in her eyes.

That punch should hurt a lot... Silvia had tasted the pain from the pair of knuckles numerous times. Silvia pitied her anyway.

"Avdocha, when were you given the right to lecture my sister."

"Uuh. You tyrant! My head is now swollen!"

The small lady, Avdocha Kiltzkaya, was called 'Avdocha The Convict' by the public but was really an ex-terrorist and now actually the leader of the Foreign Force in the service of Knight Country. Previously, during Veronica's visit to Ansarivan, she had caused many troubles for Silvia.

"Yes, so you still have extra energy to talk nonsense."

"Ouch! D-Don't hit my head anymore or else I won't be able to grow taller!"

"You are already passed twenty years-old and yet you are still thinking of growing taller? What a joke?"

"Don't be mean!"

Even Avdocha can't do anything when facing Veronica. Because she looks like a child, it appears like a kid being scolded for some pranks.

"Its been a while, Princess Silvia."

Glenn greeted and bowed in front of Silvia, without being bothered by Avdocha's and Silvia's argument. He is still the same beautiful guy that will make your eyes glitter.

Glenn was Julius's best friend and also Silvia's ex-fiancé. Even after their marriage had been canceled, but it's still embarrassing to meet like this.

"Glenn-dono, I'm happy to see you in the pink. But back to the topic, why are you here?"

"I'll answer that question."

The armour on her body made a clear loud sound when Veronica turned around. Just like she had lost interest in a toy, Avdocha was left by the side.

Veronica with a tone as heavy as her armour said:

"Actually, Mordred's ashes were stolen."

"When was it stolen?"

"We are not sure about the time. Anyway no one would expect that anyone would want to steal ashes. This mausoleum didn't even have guards before this. Maybe... Maybe They were stolen years ago and it's just that we did not realize it."

"...Then how did you found out about it now?"

"Of course the biggest clue is due to the Willingham Mausoleum incident. The enemy is obviously using the ashes of the dragons as materials to make their weapons. That's why I had given the order to check on every mausoleum that has a dragon tomb."

"And the one who was in charge of the checking was the Foreign Force led by me."

Veronica was not bothered by Avdocha, who seemed to want some sort of a reward, and shrugged her shoulders.

"...And the result is just like what you can see."

"What do you mean?"

"The things are just like what I had expected. Many sets of dragon bones and ashes have been stolen from all over the country,"

"How could it be..."

Silvia was clenching her teeth.

The enemies' movements were not just a step ahead, but two or three.

This type of cowardly technique must be from the Zepharos Empire. For it is they who understand that 'Machines will never be able to win against the dragons'.

"There's another thing, Silvia. I had heard about your heroic fight at the Willingham Mausoleum while riding on Lancelot. I'm proud of you."

"Ee..."

For one moment, Silvia didn't understand what Veronica was saying.

Only after a few moments later, she finally felt it from the bottom of her heart.

That's right... Veronica praised me.

"Thank you anee-ue."

After Silvia thanked her while smiling, Veronica's face turned red and she turned it aside.



"Hmph... don't get overjoyed yet. You are now still a little chick and your priority is to strive towards an Ark-Dragner. Then we will remove that bastard Oswald from his throne."

"A-Anee-ue..."

Silvia felt troubled.

Veronica totally hated her father, who acts like nothing but a commoner, to the extent where she will even call him 'bastard'.

"By the way... I have something to tell anee-ue."

Silvia showed a serious expression.

Perhaps that Veronica felt an abnormal air around Silvia, she silently nodded and allowed her to continue to speak.

"It is something related to anii-ue. A few days ago, I met a guy called Milgauss at Willingham Mausoleum. He is the Empire's henchman."

"I have a report regarding that man... so, what has he to do with Julius?"

"Please listen to me calmly. Even though this is just my intuition... I think that Milgauss is anii-ue."

"Nonsense!"

The person who shouted loudly wasn't Veronica but the quiet Glenn who was standing behind her.

"Glenn-dono?"

"It's impossible! That man is still kicking... and has become an active spy for the Empire... That's absolutely outrageous!"

Silvia could understand how Glenn felt. Glenn and Julius were best friends all the time they were studying in Ansarivan.

"Generally speaking, what proof do you have Silvia-sama-"

"—Keep your cool Glenn—^[19] The person who you are speaking to is my sister."

Veronica was like a beast trainer, trying to tame a beast, when lecturing Glenn.

"I'm... Sorry."

Even a person like Glenn knelled down and apologized on the spot like a beast being whipped.

"I still have something to report to anee-ue. You had just said that Mordred's ashes were stolen... After some careful thought, the Necromancia that attacked Ansarivan looked a little like Mordred."

Veronica was stunned upon hearing.

"...Silvia, you mustn't tell anyone about this. Even just the possibility that Julius is still living will have a great impact on the Knight family. Plus Mordred, who is now suspected to be the Necromancia, is another problem... This information should be kept confidential. Do you understand?"

"Yes... Anee-ue,"

Silvia immediately promised without a second thought.

Part 4

Silvia parted with Veronica and the rest at the entrance of the Mausoleum.

"We'll now head back to town." Silvia said to Cosette.

"Yes princess. We still have not yet decided what you are going to wear tonight."

"For the masquerade...? Sad to say, but I'm not longing for it."

Silvia sighed.

"Ara? This is a good chance to invite Ash-sama. Anyway, this is a masquerade. The difference between social statuses can be temporally cast aside. You just need to become immersed in the atmosphere... Then the two of you will be at the balcony alone after the dance. With the holy rays of silvery moon light as a romantic setting, both of you will kiss passionately while hugging each other tightly."

"What nonsense are you mumbling about! You have been reading too much of those third grade novels." ^[20]

Silvia's face suddenly became as if it was on fire. After she scolded Cosette, she remembered the scenario during dinner time yesterday.

Oswald suspected that Ash and Silvia don't have a simple relationship. Ash who was interrogated in the end swore that he will never touch even a single strand of Silvia's hair.

"Princess and I..... Are not in a relationship!" The words that Ash used to beg Oswald kept on repeating in Silvia's mind.

Paladin? He is just a useless guy! But Ash was so scared that he used 'not in a relationship' as a shield!

Silvia was getting mad just thinking about it.

But what confuses her most are her own thoughts. She just heard the words 'not in a relationship' but why was she this mad about it.

"Arrgh! I can't stand it! What's wrong with me!"

Cosette, while looking at the troubled Silvia, smiles knowingly.

"Princess has also already begun the journey of youth!"

"Reunion ~A.S.B.1365.7~" is closed.

Chapter 6 - Ancient palace's abandoned garden

Part 1

"Uu~n..."

Ash woke up, after touching something that felt soft and comfortable.

He felt as if he'd been sleeping for quite a long time.

There was a ticking sound coming from beside his pillow. He stretched his hand to search for the source and touched something cold.

It was the silver watch that Oswald awarded to him last night.

-The Proof of a Dragner.

For all the citizens of the Knight Country, everyone dreams of getting their hands on this silver watch. Ash flipped open the cover and took a glance.

The outer design was made so that the inner structure could be seen. The precise movement of the quaint yet complicated gear mechanisms, regulating each and every second, would make people stare at it in awe.

The position that the hands pointed to was twelve sharp.

"Is it already noon..."

This energetic feeling that he had after waking up might as well be the first time in his whole life.

Also what is this fruity smell? This refreshing smell had some sweetness in it and it felt like a smell that teenage girls would like.

The main point is, this bolster is very good. Not only that it is soft, it also felt warm. It also could change its shape according to Ash's will. Just as expected of a bedding set prepared in Fountain City...

-Stop, hold on! I remember very well that no bolster was prepared.

When he found out in surprise that his memories contradicted with reality, Ash immediately rubbed his sleepy eyes.

"Sss... Sss..."

Prim, who was only in her underwear, was soundly sleeping right next to Ash.

The thing that Ash thought was a bolster was actually Prim's soft body! Just like a child embracing its mother, Ash had his face sunk deep into the valley.

Ash only now realized what the extremely soft object was.

"Uwaaaaa! W-Why is Prim-san sleeping here!"

Ash jumped up in shock.

Even while someone was shouting beside her, Prim was still sleeping soundly.

"Hey... What is this ruckus about?"

There was a sound of disparagement coming from the bed beside his. It was Eco. She sat up while rubbing her sleepy eyes then she stared at Ash angrily.

For a moment, Eco's expression froze.

"Hey... What's the big idea? Why is Prim sleeping on your bed?"

"Please calm down, Eco! I was also wondering why!"

"Then... how are you going to explain the maid attire that is scattered all over the floor."

Following Eco's sight, indeed the floor was full of Prim's maid attire.

"Hmm... I see."

There was a black killing intent surrounding Eco and sounds like "Gggggggg" could somehow be heard.

"Hey... I had told you a few times, no? You are not my master; 'I' am the master! But you take the opportunity of your master sleeping... To lure a maid into your bed... and did things like this and that to her... No?"

Eco was still just as naïve as the time she was born, but in the last few months she had learned quite a number of things about humans. The dragons have stores of knowledge that had been passed down since

ancient times— The Dragonweiss. Eco can obtain any knowledge if she searched using it.

But Eco had obviously misunderstood.

"S-Stop! That's not it! I did nothing! It is the truth!"

"The truth is right in front of my eyes, who would believe anything you say!"

At the same time as Eco was ticking down to explode, someone slammed the door open.

"Ash! Are you alright! I thought that I heard something weird..."

It was Silvia who banged into the room and following behind her was Cosette. They had probably heard Ash's voice in the corridor and came to make sure.

"Hey, Ash... Why is Prim... sleeping on your bed... in only her underwear?"

Once she found out about Prim, Silvia made the same frightening expression as Eco.

The familiar lines could be heard once again.

"A knight must not commit fornication before marriage!"

Silvia was jinxing when she approached Ash with steady footsteps.

"I swear that... I'll never forgive you!"

To synchronize with Silvia's footsteps, Eco leaped from her bed towards Ash.

Ahh... Stop. If you continue following this pattern there will be...

It will be useless even if he tries to protest. Ash could only leave the rest to fate.

"I'm gonna trample you!"

"This is the Lautreamont's family rules!"

Part 2

"S~sorry! It is my fault... I had mistaken the rooms and also slept on Ash-sama's bed. I'm really sorry!"

Prim, who had finally woken up, cleared up the misunderstandings as she explained in tears.

"By the way... I wanted to inform you something about tonight's dress code."

Cosette gently spoke as if to end the quietness:

"Tonight? Aah... The Masquerade ?"

Cosette nodded after Ash asked.

"That's right. If it is alright, I hope that you will allow Eco to try on some evening dresses."

"Would you also lend me some cute evening dresses this time?" Upon hearing Cosette, Eco became excited.

Right now her eyes were glittering and had totally forgotten about her anger.

"Ufufu. I have prepared some of the best evening dresses, that suit you, for this ball. But..."

"But..."

"I'm going to be busy with princess's dressing today so the person who will assist Eco will be—"

Cosette showed a bitter smile and glanced at Prim.

"Will be in Prim's hands."

Eco was shocked by what she had said and immediately lost her temper.

"Hold on! This clumsy maid will be in charge of my dressing? Are you kidding me!"

"Uuuuugh" Prim, after she heard Eco's heartless critiques, gave a deep sigh while pressing her hand against her chest.

Upon seeing that, Cosette placed her hand on her shoulder and smiled.

"Please rest assured. Although onee-chan is always clumsy, good at destroying things, frequently enters the wrong room, her brains are not that bright and also a profound lack of energy just like an human being dragged along by her breasts, but..."

"Please stop! Cosette-san! Prim-san is nearly in tears!" Ash immediately reminded her.

Cosette was still mumbling something like Ara ara, oh no and immediately covered her mouth with her hand.

"H-How can you... So Onee-chan is such a person in your eyes..."

Prim, who had been crying, looked at the floor and sat down without any spirit. She could be seen mumbling with tears in her eyes with something like: Since I'm just a useless girl....

"Ufufu. You should have listened until the end before taking any action, onee-chan. For a useless sister like you, you are better at picking beautiful things than me."

"That's absolutely correct!"

Upon being praised, just like a corpse being reborn, Prim rose up from the ground.

"Is it true...?"

Eco didn't even try to hide her suspiciousness and glanced at Prim.

Prim, who received motivation from Cosette, was no longer in her timid self. She shook her busty chest and made the declaration.

"You need not worry about anything. I will take care of everything. I swear that I will find Eco an evening dress that suits her the best!"

Part 3

After lunch, Eco was dragged off to the changing room by Prim. Ash, who had nothing to do, was lazily lying on the bed.

"Guys can relax at times like this."

Ash had decided to attend the ball using the suit that he wore yesterday when he had dinner with Oswald. The suit was hanging by the wall right now.

In conclusion, guys just need to choose a black suit to attend but it is different for a girl.

-Knock Knock...

Upon hearing the door knocks, Ash jumped up from the bed.

It is impossible for Eco and Prim to return this early.

"Who is it...?"

Ash was a little nervous when he couldn't figure out who was knocking.

"Please wait for a moment!"

After informing the person on the other side of the door, Ash covered his naked left arm with bandages. To him, this could be considered a normal routine, so he only spent less than thirty seconds to complete the bandages.

There were amazing symbols that looked like several poisonous black snakes branded on his left arm.

That is the proof of Ash's contract with the dragons—his 'Seikoku'.

Normally, the size of a 'seikoku' will never be larger than the size of a palm but only Ash's 'Seikoku' was so overly large. Because it looked like a bad omen, Ash had always kept it hidden.

Ash, who had already dealt with the bandages, slowly open the door.

Fragrance of roses slowly entered the room.

"Princess!"

"W-Why were you startled?"

That's right, Silvia was standing at the doorway with a poker face. Her white blouse paired with a blue skirt- It is a fresh sight which can be rarely seen at the academy.

"Err... Can you spare me some of your time, I just wanted to have a talk."

"Alright..."

Ash invited Silvia to enter his room after having a look out in the corridor. Luckily there isn't a single soul in the corridor. Ash gave a sigh of relieve and quickly closes the door. If this scenario was seen by someone from the palace... Ash felt that his life was threatened just by thinking about it.

"..."

After Silvia looked around in the room, choosing—out of all places—to sit on the bed.

-W-Why must you sit at there...! Why not on the sofa...!

"Anything wrong? Why don't you have a seat too?"

Upon saying this, Silvia tapped at the place beside her.

Ash gave a visible gulp while swallowing his saliva and sat beside Silvia.

"..."

Even when she came here with some intentions, Silvia's mouth still remains shut.

"That's it. Don't you need to put on your evening dress?"

Ash, who can no longer bear with the silence, asked.

Silvia answered softly with her poker face:

Basically, I have already decided what to wear. But... there were some parts that were too tight. So it was brought to the tailor to have adjustments done.

"But you don't look like you have grown fatter?"

Silvia immediately blushed.

"I'm talking about my chest! My breasts have grown since last year... Look at what you had made me say!"

"S-Sorry!"

The moment Silvia straightened her body; her beautifully shaped breasts were bouncing up and down. Ash immediately averted his eyes.

"Since it was brought to the tailor, don't you need to wait beside?"

"The measurement has already been taken. So before the tailor is done adjusting, there is nothing that I can do."

At this moment, Silvia was looking downwards embarrassingly, and spoke after a few seconds of making up her mind:

"Err... I want to say that, since both of us are free, we could have a little chat. O-Of course that if you feel that I am a bother, then I will take my leave..."

Ash gave a wry smile. When he saw Silvia being nervous, Ash on the other hand had calmed down.

"Nope, I am free right now. Eco and Prim aren't in and when I think about the upcoming masquerade... I don't feel like taking a tour in the town.

"Is it so... Great."

Silvia looked spiritless. She was no longer her usual energetic self. She looked as if she wanted to say something important but she didn't know how to convey it. So Ash tried to give her a push.

"If you are worried about something, I will be glad to hear it out. I think that a Princess, who was born in the Royal Knight's Family, will carry a larger burden compared to a peasant like me. So... I don't know how much I am able to help you but I am ready to hear out what you want to say."

Silvia lifted her head and looked at Ash with her clear blue eyes. Maybe he was too sensitive towards her expression, he thought that she somehow became relieved

"I see. So it means that you are willing to listen to my troubles... No?"

Part 4

"Haa... This too is still lacking."

Eco was facing some trouble in the changing room on the second floor. Because she had been searching for some time and she still couldn't find a dress that will make her say 'This is the one'.

"Do you like this?"

Prim was getting nervous as she rubbed off the sweat on her forehead.

"Everyone will dress themselves up to their best in a ball, no? As a noble dragon girl, how could I lose to a stupid and ignorant human. Especially that Silvia!"

Eco declared while crossing her arms in front of chest.

"Or do you think that, I, have no chance of winning against Silvia?"

"I-I daren't say so! The thing is... I am curious regarding why are you always trying your best to compete against Silvia? Could it be... it is because of Ash-sama?"

Eco immediately blushed.

"W-W... What are you talking about! It has nothing to do with him!"

Prim bend her neck to a side and continued to stare at Eco.

"Suspicious!"

"Nothing suspicious!"

"But the relationship between Ash-sama and Silvia-sama is not something to joke about. I was shocked during yesterday's dinner. Because it was the first time I saw Silvia-sama seem to have a close relationship with a guy when talking to him."

"Urgh..."

After Prim finished talking, Eco felt insecure. That's right, Ash and Silvia's friendship had been getting better in recent days.

-To leave me, as the owner, on the sidelines, to have an affair with some female animals? What is this! Why don't I just squash him flat today!

No, Ash is the true owner.

Basically, Eco knew this. Even so, because of her pride, she refused to admit it.

Is Ash fed up with my attitude? So he rather chooses to mix with some female animals?

Apart from Silvia, there is Rebecca, Jessica and Lucca to name a few... There seem to be many females with great feminine charm around Ash.

Recently, the waitress in the student's restaurant—The female animal who is called Anya was also a little suspicious. She kept on asking things about Ash. She probably is also interested in Ash...

"Eco-chan, do you hate Princess?"

The sudden question brought Eco back to her sense.

"I don't hate her... During the Selective Training Camp, she was generous enough for allowing me to ride on Lancelot. But her breasts made me mad!"

Prim smiled bitterly and sighed with a heavy tone:

"Eco-chan, you must be suffering a lot."

"...Suffer what?"

Eco was startled.

After Prim paused for a moment, she said:

"Because... Ash-sama is a human and you are a dragon. One day in the future, Ash-sama will get married with a human girl and have children together- Aah, Eco-chan!"

Before Prim could manage to finish her sentence, Eco suddenly ran through the door to the corridor.

"Eco-chan! Please stop! I-I ... Did I say something bad!?"

Prim was chasing behind her but Eco kept on running forward without even turning her head back.

This is frustrating!

Eco didn't understand why she was this frustrated.

But her frustration and anger had urged her to keep on running.

She was not angry about Prim. Eco knew well that Prim said that without any bad intention.

Ash and Eco are bound together by the contract. They shared their life and death together. Eco had always believed that there is no stronger bond than this and thus she was assured of their relationship.

So she had never thought of Ash being taken away by someone.

But- Ash is a human and Eco is a dragon.

Just in case what Prim stated was true...

If Ash fell in love and decide to settle down...

Then what am I to him?

"Uuuu... *Hick*"

Eco was running aimlessly in tears.

"Tsk... I already knew the answer... That guy is the real owner-"

That's right... In the far future I will only be treated as a pet dragon.

As a pet, she could only wish for Ash's happiness from the side. She will pass her days by eating when she is hungry and shake her tail when she has nothing to do just like a tamed beast...

"Urgg... That kind of life is just too sad...."

That is not the kind of love Eco wants from Ash.

Her chest felt like it was being bound tightly. It is painful. Just too painful.

With her head filled with mixed emotions, Eco was running wildly. She ran down the stairs and passed through the hall towards the entrance.

Since the ball is going to be held, the security is tighter. The guards immediately tried to stop her.

"You there! Stop!"

When her wrist was being held, Eco angrily showed her teeth. After struggling the guards were knocked away like dried leaves. One by one the guards were knocked off by Eco.

No matter how strong the soldiers are, when up against Eco, they were just like puppets.

"Uuu..."

But, this incident made Eco realize more that she is born a dragon. Just by thinking that human guys didn't like abnormally strong girls, more of her tears flowed out.

Eventually she made it through the heavily guarded entranceway, and all at once Eco was outside of the palace.

"Hold on! Eco-chan!"

It seems that the clumsy Prim was still chasing her nonstop.

Eco was already confused about the reason that made her run. But she didn't want Prim to see her crying face.

Just by looking at the sky she felt depressed.

The clear sky a few moments ago had suddenly filled with dark clouds as if it is going to rain anytime. The roaring of thunder could somehow be heard from afar.

Under a sky filled with ominous dark clouds Eco ran and ran without even looking back once.

Suddenly, she tripped over something.

"-Kyaa!"

Because of her strong momentum, Eco was sent flying head first. The moment she landed on the ground, her palms hurt like they were on fire.

"Darn!"

One of her mule^[21] had dropped off and was lying on her ground with its bottom facing upwards just like the current Eco.

"Where am I...?"

Eco was looking at her surroundings.

Even though the area was still within the palace gardens, it was not well taken care of. It was full of weeds and not a single flower can be seen.

It can be called an abandoned garden.

There was an old double-storied building that looked like it is going to crumble anytime right in front of her. It is no different from a ruin. There

was a stone tablet beside the entrance. It is obvious that ruin is an ancient palace.

She had never thought that there was such a lonely place behind the grand palace.

"It hurts...!"

The pain was coming from her palm. There was also blood on her right knee.

But Eco was sad because her favorite clothes were being dirtied and even now they were filled with mud.

This was a dress bought by Ash in Ansarivan for the trip a few days before their departure.

Eco loves the pale blue color of this dress and the ribbon at the chest.

But now it was full of mud...

Just at that moment-

Click... the entrance door of the ancient palace was opened followed by the sound of an old mechanism running.

A group of five people appeared from the ancient palace.

Judging from their attire, they are just the palace servants. But right away Eco knew something was wrong. Those people looked just like the palace servants but seeing their hunter liked eyes and body movements... She knows that they are not some small fry.

Eco immediately lays low hiding within bushes as tall as her.

The leader of the group looked like a girl in a maid attire. It is the same palace designed maid attire that Cosette and Prim wear.

No, although they were well imitated, Eco had seen through them.

That maid attire must be a fake. Not only did the cloth they used lack glossiness, some of the details in the attire are also different from the real thing.

Then a familiar face of the girl startled Eco.

"Why is that girl... Here?!"

Isn't she called Anya... the one working at the student restaurant 'La Tene'.

Why would a waitress pretend to be a maid and walk around in Fountain City?

Eco was totally confused.

Basically, Eco knew her. But right now, her instinct told her not to call out to Anya.

The Anya right in front is not the kind Anya in the restaurant. Her eyes right now are that of a warrior.

The guys beside Anya who were acting polite towards her also seemed weird.

Out of all times— At this moment, Prim's voice can be heard all over the abandoned garden.

"Eco-chan! Where are you?"

At that instant, at lightning speed, Anya and the others started their operations. What was most frightening is that she had unsheathed a dagger. The rest of the guys also followed her by pulling out theirs.

Right now, Eco knew she was right about Anya being the enemy. She immediately stood up and shouted to Prim:

"Don't come here! Run, quick!"

Part 5

Not long before, the special force led by Anya had successfully infiltrated Fontaine City through a dark underground secret passage.

When she took a peek after climbing up the stairs from the passage, she realized that the exit is at the ruins of the ancient palace. She found out that the fire place in the guest-room was also connected to the secret passage.

The information about the underground passage was given by Milgauss. How did Milgauss get to know about the existence of this underground passage? Once again, Anya was bothered by this question.

The group of people had removed their battle gear. Anya had changed into her maid attire and the rest had changed into their manservant wear. All these imitations were supplied by Klaus.

Anya led her four underlings out of the ancient palace. The sun could not be seen and the grey sky made it seem like it was going to rain anytime soon.

We must infiltrate the palace immediately... Anya tried to build up her spirit.

The surroundings of the old building was an abandoned garden. No matter how tight the security is at the front, they will never guess that an enemy would appear from such a place. There isn't even a single guard here.

The next objective is to find Eco in the palace, lead her out to a quite place, kidnap and take her back to Beowolf. Only then is her mission complete.

Along the way in the abandoned garden, Anya touched her pistol hidden in her cloths. The bullets were filled with strong tranquilizers.

The special weapon was provided by Milgauss. Even though it is a tranquilizer... it will still be a lie if she says she will not hesitate to shoot a girl like Eco.

"Chief, anything wrong?"

Anya came back to her senses after being questioned by an underling.

"...Nothing."

That's it, she mustn't forget that she is leading a team right now. As a chief of the Tantalos tribe, she is also the leader of the special force at the same time. If she was not focused on her mission, her whole team will be in danger... After some thought, she made up her mind.

Right at this moment.

"Eco-chan! Where are you~?"

Suddenly, there was a panicking voice that was spoken slowly.

A maid appeared right in front. When she saw Anya and the rest, she became confused.

Anya realized something. This maid shouted Eco's name a few moments ago. So she must be one of Eco's acquaintances...

No matter what, she mustn't let loose of this opportunity. As long as she captures this maid and interrogates her, she probably could save her trouble for doing land combing in search for Eco.

Anya signaled her underlings behind with her fingers and immediately unsheathed her dagger.

Under Anya's directions, the four underlings immediately split up.

They intend to surround the maid.

"Don't come here! Run, quick!"

The voice that suddenly came out of nowhere shocked Anya.

That cry sounds familiar.

"That's young dragon Eco."

Her underlings stopped their footsteps at the same time upon hearing Anya's shout.

At the same time, there was a lightning strike and the sound of thunder. The sound of thunder that seemed far away a few moments ago was slowly but eminently approaching.

"All of you, go and capture Eco! I will deal with the maid!"

Under Anya's order, the underlings had shifted their targets. All four of them attacked Eco at the same time.

Even though she is a dragon, she looked like a girl. It should be an easy job for four big burly Tantalos man. After Anya made the positive judgment, she attacked the maid.

"Huh? What is happening- Ouch!"

Anya punched the maid in her stomach. The maid lost her consciousness and dropped on the ground.

"Hmph, the citizens of the Knight Country are really weak."

The same time Anya snubbed her nose, thunder roared and the drizzling rain turned into a down pour. The coldness of the rain doesn't make the season feel like summer.

Anya, thinking that her four underlings should have kept Eco in control, turned her head to look.

"Wha...!"

Anya shivered when she saw the scene behind.

"...Tsk, this is why I hate stupid and ignorant humans."

Not only Eco wasn't captured, she was even standing in the middle of the garden in rage. Her hair is wet and messy from being dripped on by the rain but her red eyes were full of spirit.

Three of the special force members were already on the ground.

"Damn you brat...!"

The fourth member lifted his dagger and attacked Eco directly. Seeing that his companions were knocked out, he had lost his temper.

Suddenly Eco leaped. She flew up in front of him, before the dagger struck, and gave him a punch in the stomach.

"*Cough*!"

Even though it seems like a girl struggling to escape... For her underling was like being attacked by a bull and was easily knocked back. This scene is what someone can find in a story book.

-Is that... The so called power of a dragon!?

Anya shivered.

Even when her pure self made her look fragile, the truth is Eco's strength is unimaginable.

"If you don't respect me... Then get ready to be trampled!"

The guy was lying on the ground weakly and full of mud. Eco stepped on his back without mercy.

"Ouuuuu!"

After the last underling cried in pain, he lost consciousness.

After making sure that the guy had fainted, Eco stared at Anya angrily.

"Aren't you Anya? Why do you pretend to be a waitress in the student restaurant?"

Anya remained silent. There was no need for her to answer. She silently put on her fighting posture.

"Is it... So I take that you are not going to tell me. Never mind, that's not so important anyway."

Eco immediately prepared her defense.

For a short moment, it looked like a dragon had appeared behind her body.

"I have never liked you since then. You seemed to be interested in Ash!"

Eco rushed towards Anya while splashing water all around.

Her wrist strength is very strong.

If she was hit, Anya would probably follow the footsteps of her four underlings.

But-!

"No matter how strong your strength is, there is no point if you can't land a hit!"

Anya twisted her body to one side getting out of the way of Eco's head-buttt.

"Urgh..."

Eco, who nearly fell because of her momentum, immediately turned around and faced Anya again. She had now changed her weapon into her fist.

Anya dodged her first punch by just a few millimeters.

-Don!

The wind pressure of the punch swept passed her face painfully. This straight punch looks as if it can cut through rain. It felt as if the wind pressure of the punch is strong enough to blow a human off his feet.

No wonder her four underlings were easily knocked out. But Anya had not yet broken a sweat. Her ability is greater than all the four guys who were still the top in the tribe.

"Damn... why can't you just get knocked out!"

Eco angrily swung her fist again but in Anya's eyes, she was no longer a frightening enemy.

"...Urgh!"

Eco, who through a miss, was tripped by the mud and lost her balance.

The afternoon thunderstorm had not yet stopped. Anya had long found out that the ground was slippery, but Eco, who is only a few months old, probably didn't notice these details.

Seeing Eco's defense is exposed, Anya takes the chance.

"Haa!"

She gave Eco a kick with all her might behind her neck.

Her foot had knocked in to Eco's neck with water splashing everywhere.



If she was to be a normal human, Eco would be knocked out of conscious in just a second.

"Urgh... How dare you kick me!"

"It can't be!"

Anya was shocked.

Eco nearly fell, but managed to stand still with only will power. She was staring at Anya with tears in her eyes.

Her face that was wet with the rain water is full of killing intent.

"I swear I'll, I'll... Trample you!"

Eco while showing her teeth rushed towards Anya. Not only did she have huge amount of strength she is also as hardy as a dragon. But Eco attacked aimlessly just like a trapped animal. If this fight continues... it probably won't end before the night arrives.

Anya made a search in her cloths with her hand and felt something cold. If it is possible, she will never chose to use this thing, but she mustn't waste any time anymore.

"...Please don't think badly of me."

After Anya took out and aimed the pistol, she pulled the trigger without a single hesitation.

Part 6

After Silvia finished her story, Ash was in a great shock.

Ash absolutely couldn't believe what he heard. Milgauss is most probably Prince Julius—this was what Silvia had said.

Of course Ash knew that Julius was sentenced to death for committing a taboo. That can be said as the worst scandal in the long history of the Lautreamont family.

"But Prince Julius... Wasn't he already sentenced to death?" Ash asked, still doubting the statement.

But Silvia continues on mumbling her explanation:

"The information about him being sentenced to death may be fake. Chichi-ue is that kind of a person... he would never kill his own son. The truth is, I am very happy that Anii-ue is alive. I also believe that he must have his own reason for killing Mordred. But... why is he cooperating with the Empire and bringing disasters to the Knight Country? This is the only part that doesn't make sense. What should I do..."

Silvia pursed her lips and looked downwards without saying a word. Just by thinking about the burden and her troubles Ash felt that his head is starting to spin. But, seeing Silvia being troubled by her worries, Ash knew that he can no longer remain silent.

"Actually... I didn't quite remember what my father looks like."

"...?"

Silvia lifted her head and looked at Ash confusedly.

"Even though it is not right for me as a son to say so, but my father was an odd person... He disappeared after my sister's birth. Somehow, my family talks less and less about him. As for why would my father leave us... I had been wondering about this for ages, but I can't simply ask this question. One day... I finally asked my mother out of curiosity."

"Did she tell you anything?"

"No, she didn't even mention a single thing. But she promised me that she will tell me everything when I grow up. This is also the reason why I have never asked about it since."

This is the first time Ash had the chance to talk about his family background, so he is a little shy. Still, he is happy that Silvia listened to him attentively.

"In the end... What I wanted to say is, your problem won't be solved if you keep it all to your self. If you have the time to feel sad, why not directly ask the person involved. Isn't that better?"

"If I could do it, I wouldn't be facing all this trouble... But what you say is reasonable."

Silvia had regained her happy expression.

"Thank you, Ash. With your encouragement, I feel that the burden has somehow lifted."

Her cute-ish smile made Ash's heart beat nonstop. Silvia's impression within the academy was the 'Graceful but unapproachable beautiful princess'. Who would have known that she can make such a smile.

In this instant, there was a bright light coming from the sky and the next second, the thunder was roaring.

The loud sound felt as if it had landed right beside them. Ash turned his gaze to look outside the window and found it to be raining heavily.

Then, he finally felt the smell of the rain.

"Kyaa!"

Just as expected, Silvia who was born timid immediately screamed. She was so frightened that she lost her sense and cuddled in Ash's arms.

"Uwaa...!"

Ash was shocked and fell on the bed with Silvia hugging him.

Silvia was trembling and cuddled to Ash tightly. On her snow white face, there falls the shadows of her long eye lashes.

"...Princess?"

Even after Ash called out to her, Silvia still remained silent. She shut her eyes tightly and embraced Ash. Just like a child, she was trembling nonstop.

There won't be much of a problem if it's only to this extent. But ash felt something soft that shouldn't exist in this world. That is certainly not something that can be felt from a child. It is Silvia's breast which was pressing tightly against Ash's body.



雷は二度、三度と繰り返された。
そのたびに、シルヴィアはピクッと身体を震わせて、
アッシュを抱き締める腕に力をこめる。
……どのくらいの時間、そうしていたのだろうか。

The lightning strikes two, three times. Every time it strikes, Silvia trembled a little and tightens her hug.

...Both of them remained in the same position for some time.

"Are you alright, Princess?"

When the sounds of the thunder and the winds had stopped, Ash slowly asked. If Silvia kept on sticking to him, he felt like his heart is going to burst. So, Ash pretended to give Silvia a gentle push and sat up.

"Nn..."

Silvia was lying on the bed when she opened her eyes that were shut close for a long time. There were tears at the edge of her eyes which was probably from the tremendous fear that she had just been through.

"Wha...!"

Silvia who finally calmed down immediately blushed. She probably had realized the situation that she was in.

As a princess, she was lying on a bed defenseless while being looked at by Ash-

-T-This is bad.

Ash had made his mental preparation for the coming 'fist of the Lautreamont Family Rules'.

Although he did nothing wrong, through his past experience, he was already used to this kind of ending. Basically, everything will end after that fist.

But, Silvia was still lying on the bed with her red face.

Ash felt that her eyelashes were shaking.

"Princess...?"

Ash looked carefully at Silvia.

In contrast to a ferocious Dragner, her limbs were thin and nicely shaped. The two lumps of meat at her chest were moving up and down following her breathing tempo...

In this instant, Ash felt that his mind was going to crack.

Silvia was not wearing a bra right now. The pink tips could somehow be seen underneath her blouse that was covered in sweat and was breaking down Ash's mental reasoning ability.

Why is Silvia not moving?

Why is she not in her usual angry self and try to hit me?

What if I try to touch her right now?

-N-No, I mustn't! Princess right now is... Is worried about Prince Julius so she couldn't think straight. For me to take advantage of others at such moment... I can never do this. Not even in a million years...

-Kon, kon.

There was someone knocking the door.

Although it just a usual knock, but in this situation, the sound was piercing Ash's ears.

"...Urgh!"

Silvia had probably thought the same thing. Just like the magic had disappeared, she jumped off from the bed.

"Sorry for intruding."

The person outside entered before Ash replied.

It was Cosette.

"The evening dress has been altered. I am here to pick up Princess."

The way Cosette speaks was unnatural and way too formal. She probably had seen through what had happened between Ash and Silvia.

"...Understood. I will head there right now."

Silvia kept her calm and followed Cosette out of the room.

"Haa..."

Ash felt that he had lost his energy and fell on the bed.

If he had more courage, if Cosette didn't intrude—

Silvia and He, who were on the bed would probably...

"Uwaa! What am I thinking about!"

Ash was rolling around on the bed.

He really wanted to get rid of this trouble. Too bad for him that the bed was full of Silvia's smell, which caused him to get more and more jumpy.

He kept on recalling the rose fragrance, the glimmering golden hair and the soft peaks.

As he was rolling around, Ash saw the bed beside him.

Eco and Prim still haven't returned from the changing room.

His worry suddenly disappeared.

"What is taking Eco so long?"

"Black Prelude ~A.S.B.1365.7~" is closed.

Chapter 7 - Masquerade

Part 1

The Seventh Continental Congress 'Elysium' ~A brief introduction of the attendees of each country~

I. Holy Espada Agency

The Pope Raquel IV is in charge of organizing this congress. Even though she is nine years old, her strong clairvoyance is recognized by all. She is a genius who was recommended to become the pope at a young age. She is now accompanied by twelve cardinals.

II. Chevron Kingdom

Apart from King Zacherias III and three princes, there are also the nobles who were involved in the country's politics who attended. They made up a total of three thousand people all together which can be said to be the biggest group.

III. Zepharos Empire

Emperor Ortofon VIII will be absent because of old age. He will be replaced by the baron of the Vandenhaar borders. Apart from that, there were a few more powerful nobles who attended. Although their numbers were next to the Chevron Kingdom's the amount of attendees for them is unusually small.

IV. Labrock Trade Union

Led by the Caudillo EnzoSabatini, a total of seven mayors from seven major cities attended.

V. Lautreamont Knight Country

Apart from Paladin Oswald and First Princes, Princess Veronica, the Fourth Princess, Princess Silvia will attend the congress for the first time. The second and the third princess will not attend because of studying abroad. Also, there are a few nobles who attend.

Part 2

After putting aside the pamphlet he took with him to pass time, Ash lay down on the bed lazily.

"Just as I thought, Princess-sama is amazing."

A few moments before, Silvia was lying on this bed exchanging gazes with him. The living Silvia is just an arm length away. But after he saw Silvia's name on the pamphlet, he still felt that she was still at that unreachable height.

Ash took out the silver watch that was given by the Paladin.

It was already six fifteen in the evening.

"It is already this late?"

After remembering that the masquerade starts at six thirty, he made up his mind to change. Just when Ash is reaching to take down the suit hanging on the wall— He stopped.

"What is Eco doing?"

Girls are different from guys. They need to take their time to get prepared. Ash understands that. Even so, Eco and Prim had been away for four hours.

"Even if they are slow, this is just..."

Who knows where has she been to together with Prim.

After making up his mind, Ash removed the bandages on his left arm.

His left arm that was fully covered with his 'Seikoku' can be seen.

"Luckily I am connected with Eco."

Not long ago, Eco was kidnapped by Angela. During that time, Ash found Angela's hiding place with the help of his 'Seikoku'.

Ash placed his left fist on his forehead and held his left wrist with his right hand.

"Please... Tell me where Eco is right now!"

After a pause, his left arm started to feel hot and the embroidered symbols on his left arm started to glow. Butterflies created by magic started to fly one by one. These butterflies were like road signs and normally will show the way to Eco.

"Huh??"

But what happened next left Ash staring blankly. The butterflies created had disappeared and the lights and heat coming from his left arm too were gone.

"What's happening!?"

Ash stood still, dumbfounded. Even though he kept on trying for the second and third time, he still ended up failing. His 'Seikoku' was like a broken bright-dragon-crystal powered lamp. It stopped functioning completely.

He had a bad feeling. This is Paladin's main city, so he had never expected for Eco to face any danger here. Still, the connection between him and Eco, that had been cut off, was still the truth.

"Damn...!"

Ash was out of options and rushed out from the room.

He was running aimlessly at the long corridor.

When he was in the room together with Silvia, Eco probably was in danger... When Ash thought about this, he was disgusted by himself.

The space in the palace is wide. Even though he had absolutely no idea where to search for Eco, still he couldn't stay worried in his room.

Just when he was rushing at full speed at the corner, Ash saw a maid.

"Uwaa!"

"Ara ara."

At the same time the maid was mumbling something, she nimbly avoided Ash.

Not only that, just when he was going to fall, she also seized Ash's necktie and pulled him back. Ash was lucky as he was a few moments away from falling head down.

"It is not like the normal Ash-sama to run around panicking in the corridor."

Ash looked back embarrassedly and saw Cosette.

Ash as if he met his savior begged Cosette to help him.

"Eco and Prim have not yet return! Even the 'Seikoku' had no reaction!"

Cosette immediately became serious.

"Understood. I will immediately order the maids who are not on duty to search for them. It will be better than to let Ash-sama run around aimlessly.

"Thank you! Lets—"

"You mustn't. Please follow the original plan and attend the masquerade, Ash-sama."

"How could I... She is my pal. It isn't right for me not to search for her!"

"Please don't forget that this is Fontaine City. The coming words may not be pleasant, so I beg your pardon; Since the 'Seikoku' is not reacting, even if Ash-sama had joined the search, there is nothing you can do."

"Wha....!"

"On the other hand, we maids knew the structure of this palace. Please believe in us and let us handle this matter. Not to mention that Prim onee-chan is my family. I will deal this matter with full force."

"Understood..."

After Ash promised while nodding, Cosette finally smiled.

"Although this doesn't seem right, I must ask Ash-sama to act as Princess's escort."

"Princess's escort?"

"Even though she has always been as you saw, actually, she is very timid and afraid of strangers. But, as long as Ash-sama is with her, I don't think that it will be a problem."

Cosette's plan should be perfect. But this is the time where Eco will face danger any moment, and yet he was enjoying the masquerade, he didn't feel that this is the right thing to do.

As if she had seen through what ash was thinking, Cosette guaranteed:

"Please have faith in me, Ash-sama."

Ash reluctantly accepted.

"...Alright. Eco will be in your hands."

Part 3

After four in the evening, Anya returned to Beowolf through the long secret passage. After handing over Eco to Dr Hoffman, she borrowed the shower room.

Although it is summer, Anya felt very cold. She was drenched by the heavy rain outside not long before.

After entering the changing room, Anya firstly removed her maid attire that was soaked with water. Only then she removed her tight undergarments.

Lastly, she let loose her hair that was tied at the back of her head and she was now naked.

There was a huge mirror hanging on the wall in the bathroom.

"..."

It had been a long time since she stared at her own body.

Her wet dark hair, her wheat colored skin that only the mountain people have, her small chest and her curves that looked as if the extra flesh was removed by a knife.

Without any reasons, Anya touched her breast. Compare to 'La Tene's' manager, Rebecca, the president of the student council and Princess Silvia, there is nothing special about hers—but at least they could be compared with Eco's.



我ながら、
色気とは無縁よね……と思う。
「……！」

そんな思考がよぎった直後、
アーニャは狼狽した。
一体、自分はなにを考えているのだろう？

It seems like I am not at all feminine... Anya mocked herself.

"...!"

Just when she thought about that, Anya panicked.

What nonsense am I thinking about? In the past Anya was never bothered by her looks. It was probably that living in the dragon riding academy, for this whole time, had made her impetuous.

Logically speaking; Big breasts will become a hindrance in battle. There are even legends mentioning that female warriors, of the mountain people in the ancient times, tend to cut off one of their breasts in order to not obstruct them in archery.

"That's it. It is better to have a small breast than to face the knife!"

After Anya tried to give herself an excuse, she turned on the tap.

Although the water was initially cold, it had turned warm in just a few moments. Anya once again was amazed by the Empire's skills as she lets the warm water flow over her head.

She hoped that her impetuous feeling will be washed away together too—

Anya, while letting the warm water run down her body with her eyes closed, thought about her previous mission.

Basically, it was a successful mission.

Even though she had underestimated Eco's fighting ability and thus caused her four underlings to be injured... Still, since they were not spotted by any of the guards, she could force a pass on it.

"But... The problems start here."

Part 4

On the third floor of the palace- In the ball room, the temperature is rising. All the guests featured a silver mask. Apart from the traditional masks that hides only the area around the eyes, there were also masks shaped like dragons, lions and many other animals. Among them, there were also guests there dressed up as a clown.

Ash, wearing the formal suit and the mask that he received from the counter, stood beside the entrance. This was because Cosette had told him that, sooner or later, he will up meet Silvia if he stood there.

The palace's orchestra was performing a light music piece at the opposite side of the door. Ash could never be able to blend into this kind of environment.

"Eco... Where are you?"

Ash had called out with his 'Seikoku' numerous times... but there is still no positive result.

The 'Seikoku' is like a quite beach during the low tide.

"—Anything wrong? You look like as if you are worrying about something."

Suddenly, when he heard someone was talking to him, Ash looked up in fright. A lady with a black butterfly was staring at him. The black butterfly was of course a mask. Since it only covered the top part of her face, it was easy when it come to figure out who she was.

"Huh... Princess!"

Silvia glared at Ash.

"Uwaa, sorry..."

Ash was apologizing to Silvia while trying to check any emotional changes from her.

Her glaring golden hair was tied into a mature hairstyle together with the deep red colored ribbon that made her stand out. The long gloves that covered up to her elbow gave out the feeling of a fair lady. In her right hand was a fan which looked like the choice of a girl of high family status.

Her evening dress was blue in color with gem stones sewed on at complimenting places, its shimmering appearance looks like she just emerged from the lake during summer. In contrast to her waist, that was bound up tightly in a corset, the lower part of her dress was let out loosely and looked like a sole-lilium. ^[22]

Ash blushed. He recalled the memories two hours ago where both of them were on the bed.

"Princess... Is really beautiful."

Ash felt pathetic as he has such a poor vocabulary. That is because Silvia is that beautiful.

"D-Don't keep on staring at me. It's embarrassing...!"

When Silvia noticed Ash's sight, her cheeks turned rosy and shyly lower down her head. She opened up the fan and covered her mouth with it.

"Sorry..."

Ash was also embarrassed and turned his head aside.

There was an awkward moment in between the two and after a while, Silvia spoke:

"That's it! I had heard of it from Cosette. It was said that Eco and Prim were lost together..."

Upon hearing, Ash was now fully awake.

"That's right... Cosette right now was looking for them. If it is possible, I would also like to take part in the search. But, the 'Seikoku' is not reacting."

"What did you say! How is it possible...?"

Just when Silvia was getting tense...

"Excuse me, miss. Can you please step aside?"

A man who was hiding his face, like the rest of the guests, was speaking to Silvia gently. The man's language bears a strong Empire's accent.

"Ahh... Sorry."

Silvia immediately stepped aside.

"Thank you, Princess Silvia- Sorry, tonight should be a masquerade. Hehe... It is better if we keep each other's identity a secret."

The man who was like a noble spoke like a poet and walked into the ballroom leisurely. Even when Silvia wore her mask, the man recognized her with just a glance.

Who the hell is this guy...Ash felt uneasy.

"You!"

At the next instant, Ash shouted.

The mysterious man had a follower with him. The follower initially was accompanying the man from behind but he was forced to stop when Ash held him by the shoulder.

"You are...!"

Silvia gasped when she recognized the follower.

Ash angrily asked without hesitating:

"Milgauss... Why are you here!?"

To his horror, Milgauss attempted to enter the ballroom with his usual mask.

"...Can you please let go, Ash Blake. I have nothing that I want to say to you here."

Milgauss was calm.

Not only was Ash irritated by Milgauss when he purposely called his full name, but he also had a bad feeling about it.

"What? How dare you after doing those things..."

When Ash was going to refute, he noticed something.

The Kingdom's language that Milgauss used doesn't bear the Empire's accent. Milgauss is Prince Julius— There is a sudden increase in the probability of what Silvia had said.

"Oops. Could it be that my follower has offended both of you?"

The man before turned back to face the door. The previous tense atmosphere disappeared in an instant.

Milgauss glared at Ash as if he wanted Ash to know his place.

Through the mask, the fierce pressure that his eyes bear cause Ash to shake.

Milgauss then acted as if he had lost interest in Ash, turned around, and faced the man.

"Nothing. Just a misunderstanding. Nothing to make a fuss about."

Even though he was a follower, Milgauss didn't even try to speak in a humble form. ^[23]

Ash could only see them disappearing off into the crowd.

At this moment, Silvia spoke to Ash in a stuttered voice:

"That man... I knew him."

"Really?"

"That's it. He should be Klaus, Baron for the Vandenhaar borders."

He had never imagined to hear the name of the agent of the Zepharos Empire's Emperor from Silvia. In his heart, he felt a tense feeling as if someone was pointing a knife at his neck. The feeling was far more intense than the previous fights between Milgauss and Ash.

Part 5

After bathing, Anya changed back into a usual tribal wear.

Even though the weather was hot, she still wore the muffler around her neck. The mission before required her to remove the muffler which made her suffer a feeling like the lack of safety around her neck. Now, it is better.

After that, Anya headed to the armory to check on Eco.

Part 6

Upon stepping into the armory, the atmosphere had changed significantly into a hectic environment. 'Yggdrasill' seemed to be running and a buzzing sound can be heard.

The Millenniums on the body of the machine were shining. There are also the sounds of a technician reading off data shown on the screen.

It seems that Eco was already inside 'Yggdrasill' —The capsule.

Her clothes were removed and she was naked.

She is just like a baby holding on to her knees floating in the capsule.

Her beautiful figure gave Anya a mysterious feeling.

"Ahh, aren't you Anya-dono?"

The representative of the researchers- Dr. Hoffman^[24] noticed Anya and walk towards her.

"Has the experiment... begun?"

"At our current stage, there is nothing abnormal. It is all according to the plan."

Dr Hoffman gave a gentle smile just like a kind elderly man. But this man took Eco as a experimental object without even a second thought. This made Anya feel uneasy.

"It seems that Anya-dono didn't like much about this experiment."

Dr Hoffman's word had hit the bull's eye.

"N-No...!"

Anya felt embarrassed. Even though she denied verbally, everyone can tell that she is lying by the look of her face.

"It is alright. You are still young."

"Professor... Have you ever have any doubt? Although Eco is a dragon... her appearance is of a girl's."

"Do I have a choice? For what I am today... it is all thanks to Klaus-sama. Last time, when I was forced to carry out all types inhuman experiments, I strongly rejected them and pissed off the Zepharos Emperor. In the end... I was chased out from the capital city of Arkham. During that time, Klaus-sama became my savior and invited me to his private research center." After saying that, Dr Hoffman gave a gentle cough.

"Anya-dono, what do you think that this 'Yggdrasill' was used for?"

"I-I don't know."

"I am not surprised. Even I had no idea about what this thing was initially. I only realized after reading Milgauss-dono's written opinion."

"What did Milgauss-sama write?"

"It was said that, a long time ago... when the ancient kingdom reached its prime, humans and dragons could even control life. On the first glance on this 'Yggdrasill', Milgauss-dono knew that this is a medical tool."

"Medical...?"

"In contrary to the modern times, all the dragons in the ancient times could transform into a Maestro. But of course there were exceptions. This machine is used for dragons who couldn't transform into the Maestro type... Basically, it was for dragons with a handicap."

Anya finally understood Dr Hoffman's hint.

"In another words, our plan is to use its function... To awaken Eco?"

"That's right. We are going to compress the enormous magic of the Millennium into her body and force out her true self."

"But...Why now? Tomorrow is the continental congress 'Elysium', to launch such a experiment at such an important time is to...?"

"This has no longer anything to do with me."

Dr Hoffman's answer is no longer that of a kind old man. He just answered coldly.

"I am only following Klaus-sama's orders. Anya-dono, didn't you too obey Milgauss-dono's order to capture young dragon Eco?"

"That's... true."

Dr Hoffman's words were like an ice blade that stabbed into Anya's chest.

Part 7

It was seven in the evening.

The masquerade, that intends to bring all the people of different countries together, had started right on time.

The venue was located at the highest floor of Fontaine Palace.

Fontaine Palace, being famous for its plain design, had only this ballroom which had been designed grandly in the Chevron style.

At the dance floor in the middle of the ballroom, ladies and their partners were holding hands and dancing gracefully according to the music tempo. Around the dance floor were also bars, tables, chairs and sofas. A number of guests were chit chatting there.

Looking at those gentlemen and gentlewomen, hiding their faces behind those masks, gathered together... Ash secretly felt that this is not a place where he belongs to.

Ash avoided the crowd nimbly and headed towards Silvia and said:

"Princess was already used to this kind of ball right?"

"You are wrong. A citizen of the Knights should be focusing on plainness... It is not our wish to organize such a noisy party... Apart from that, could you not address me as 'Princess'?"

"Why?"

Ash didn't know how to react to this. Silvia suddenly stood still. She was showing an unsatisfied look on her face. Because her mask had covered the area around her eyes, Ash could only judge her expression through her lips.

"What did you think this mask is for? If you kept on saying 'Princess', everyone will know who I am."

"Ahh... You are right."

"Tsk, Can't you use some of your brains?"

"So what should I address you as?"

"Err...!"

Silvia was silenced by the unexpected question. Her face turned red in a blink of an eye.

After a few seconds, Silvia spoke:

"...You can call me Sylvie."

The Silvia right in front of him is so very attractive it made him want to give her a hug.

"Then..."

Ash gulped.

-Sylvie.

His heart was jumping nonstop. Just like resonating to Ash feelings, Silvia lowered her head and acted shyly as if to prevent her heartbeat from being heard.

Ash made up his mind and spread open his dry lips.

"Silv- Uwaa!"

At this moment, Ash with a 'Don!' was pushed aside by someone and fell down. Before he could react, Silvia was surrounded by three men.

"My beautiful ojou-san^[25]. Could I have the honor for you to be my dance partner?"

"Although your face is covered, the classy air around you couldn't be hidden from my eyes!"

"Hold on! I was here first!"

Ash was dumbstruck. Even though those men have their masks on, but judging from their actions, they are not someone simple. These men should have noticed the different air around Silvia.

"Hold on... I am a little troubled by all of you inviting me suddenly..."

If it was the usual Silvia, she will tell them off mercilessly. But, right now, she is just a girl that had little experience in this world.

-Even though she was always what you saw, actually, she is very timid and afraid of strangers

Ash remembered what Cosette had said. She is worthy to be Silvia's maid for her to notice all the details.

After Ash fell down, there were still men approaching her. The number of men surrounding her had increased from three to five.

Now it is ten. The voices that were inviting Silvia to be their dance partner were getting louder.

The guests around started to notice the noise and looked at them curiously.

"About that... I don't feel like doing it now..."

Just like ants surrounding sugars, the numbers of men surrounding were still growing.

Facing all the passionate men, Silvia was being overwhelmed.

"Hey, Ash!"

But she suddenly shouted Ash's name as if she wants Ash to come to her help.

After he made his mental preparations, Ash dragged Silvia through the walls of men.

There were sounds of disapproving from their surroundings.

"Hey, where're your manners!"

"Couldn't you take your turn!"

"Even though this is a masquerade, you must keep up with your manners!"

"You are the ones who don't have any manners..." Ash grumbled in his heart and kept on squeezing forward.

These weak nobles couldn't even make a stand when they were pushed aside by Ash and they can only make way. They are at most nobles who were raised while being sheltered and protected. Naturally, they are no match to Ash and Sylvia who undergo strict training at the dragon riding academy in terms of strength.

"Waa!"

A waiter in black immediately made way to protect the expensive wine glass upon seeing Ash rushing right into him.

In a few moments, they are no longer surrounded and their field of vision widens. At the same time, the music had become louder.

"Ehh...?"

Ash stopped.

A group of people were holding hands dancing in pairs. Only then had Ash discovered they had inadvertently run out onto the dance floor.

The numerous amount of evening dresses made the scenery appear as if hundreds of flowers were blossoming at the same time.

Every time the ladies in the dance floor twirled their bodies, their long skirts turned into a giant roses.

"W-We should retreat! Princess!"

"Didn't I told you not to call me Princess!"

"This is not a time to be arguing about those things!"

For the two to be standing in the dance floor while holding hands while arguing... Suddenly there were applause from their surroundings.

"Wh-What happened?"

From the looks of it, they definitely want to give courage for the two to dance. It was probably Silvia's classy aura emanating from her that caught their attentions. Ash was just a side character.

"What should we do now, Princess?"

Ash was troubled and turned around to look at Silvia. Seeing Ash being embarrassed, Silvia laughs.

"Wh... What are you laughing about, Princess?"

"Nothing. Right now, we can only return the favor of the guests."

"Ehh...?"

In opposite of what just happened, Silvia now took the initiative to hold Ash's hands.

"Wait! I know nothing about dancing!"

"You must have learned the basics of a ballroom dance in the physical education class before, no?"

"I-I guess so..."

"Alright, everyone is looking. I will take the lead, you just have to follow."

"Okay... I will give it a try."

Ash imitates the guests' actions and held Silvia's waist with a hand. Her waist is just as thin as a doll.

Following along with the light waltz Silvia and Ash together started to move. As they began the dance, the distance between them is so near, they can feel each other's breath. This makes Ash's head spin. Although there were a few time where he nearly tripped over Silvia's feet, she was not bothered by it and even covers for Ash.



Not long later, the other dancers around them, the beat of the music and the surrounding ballroom had all disappeared from Ash's thoughts.

Starting from the breath from her lips that had shiny gloss on them, the warm feeling from a tiny hand in his palm, the soft sensation he feels when their bodies occasionally bump with each other, to the rosy perfume smell...

While dancing, ash felt like he is going to faint.

As if to drag him back to reality, Silvia grumbled to Ash.

"Anyway, it was your entire fault for not positioning yourself properly."

"...What do you meant?"

Ash asked while accidentally stepping on Silvia's feet. Ash totally didn't get what she was saying.

"For the start when we entered this ballroom, you kept on following me from behind? No matter how I think of it, others would only see you as my follower. That's why those guys tried to approach me..."

Ash gave a wry smile.

Even at such a time as this, Silvia would only think of lecturing him. Although it fits her style well, what comes next gave ash a great big shock.

"B-But... You looked cool... Err... When you were running while holding my hand."

"Princess...?"

"N-Nothing! Forget it!"

Silvia stopped talking immediately and focused her mind on the dance.

Part 8

After dancing, Ash brought Silvia to a corner of the ballroom.

Ash wished to relax for a moment from the eyes of others. He passed a cup of drink that he received from a waiter to Silvia.

"Thank you." Said Silvia with a blushing face and she then took a sip from the cup.

Even though the ballroom dance looks graceful from afar, after trying it he finds that it actually requires a lot of energy. Ash thought.

Ash took up another cup and drank from it. The liquid in the cup was a lemon juice that tasted a little sweet and sour. He can feel that the juice was being absorbed by his exercised body.

Anyway, shouldn't there be any news yet from Cosette?... Ash wonders. It had been almost an hour since he saw Cosette.

"-Excuse me, may I have a word with you?"

There was a sudden voice coming from behind that brought Ash back to his sense and he turned around-

"You...!"

Upon seeing the person, Ash lost his composure.

He hid Silvia behind him and glared at the person.

"...Have you any business to do with us?"

After Ash asked coldly, that person just replied with a smile.

"Hmm. It seems like I have become a nuisance."

He is the young noble that they met not long before. If Silvia's prediction was right, he is Klaus, Baron for the Vandenhaar borders. Milgauss, like a shadow, was following from behind.

Even though their earlier meeting had nearly turned into a fight, Klaus still tried to greet them on purpose. There should be a limit of how much an airhead he could be.

Klaus ignored Ash and looked at Silvia. Then he gracefully held out his hand to her.

"Your dance is excellent. I would like to know that if I had the honor to dance with you?"

"Are you kidding! What are you trying to pu-"

"Ash! Hold on!"

Silvia unexpectedly stopped Ash. After she indirectly rejected Klaus offer, she looked at Milgauss.

"If this man become my dance partner, I would allow it."

"Haha! Who would have thought that I would be rejected while this follower is asked instead... You have quite some good eyes there."

Not only that her actions didn't anger Klaus, he even smiled. Silvia's words should have shattered his pride but it was like he was not even bothered by it. He looked like a proud older brother whose younger brother is admired.

"Since the lady had proposed—"

Klaus looked at Milgauss while smiling.

Milgauss remained silent. He looked as if he had merged with the mask which bears no expression. Seeing that Milgauss had not yet replied, Klaus shrugged his shoulders and said:

"Kuku. You are not allowed to decline. Don't forget that right now you are one of my followers."

Part 9

Milgauss was dancing with Silvia while holding on to each other's hands.

It is better to describe this as a beautiful show rather than a ballroom dance.

In contrast to the attractive Silvia, Milgauss hair was still with the red and white mix color. Although he gave out a dangerous feeling, it is undeniable that the masquerade provides a cover for him.

Ballroom dancing is just a general statement. In truth, Ash knew that this dance had many elaborations that were affected by the differences in each country's culture and style.

Right now, the particular style of Milgauss and Silvia's dance is undoubtedly the traditional dance of the Lautreamont Knight Country.

Ash was so focused in their dance that he had forgotten about the previous hatred.

But Ash was not the only one who was amazed.

Without knowing, everyone was entranced by Milgauss and Silvia's dance.

Right now, the only people on the floor dancing were the two of them.

They are occupying the whole wide space. Just like blessing them, the orchestra, coming into their own, began slowly building to a climax in the music.

Silvia was dancing swiftly yet elegantly, closely followed by the swaying movement of her evening dress.

Facing Silvia, Milgauss was leading the dance.

They looked like a combination of light and shadow, yet their dance is perfect.

"Wow... This is my first time seeing such a great dance." Klaus, in a low voice, spoke with admiration.

Klaus was admiring the dance while standing beside Ash.

Part 10

The dance of the two people ended silently like a setting sun.

Milgauss remained silent the whole time. He returned Silvia to Ash just like returning a book and walked off silently.

"Certainly his indifferent attitude gives me some trouble."

Klaus gave a mysterious smile and disappeared into the crowd while he ran after Milgauss.

Ash inspected Silvia's face carefully.

"Have you found any clue? Could Milgauss true identity be..."

"No... I can't be sure. Because I was very young the last time I saw Anii-ue... But, Milgauss' dance has definitely originated from the Lautreamont Knight Country. I am sure that he has a long history with the Knight Country."

Silvia murmured.

"-Ash-sama."

At this moment, someone whispered into Ash's ears.

"Cosette!"

Ash turned around. Cosette was there with a straight and serious face and said:

"The maids who head the search in the ancient palace have found Prim Onee-chan."

"Yggdrasill ~A.S.B.1365.7~" is closed.

Chapter 8 - Avalon's Imperial Princess

Part 1

In armory of the Zepharos mothership Beowolf—under Dr. Hoffman's command the battle is in full swing.

Eco was naked and floating amid the magic guided device— Inside 'Yggdrasill's' capsule. There are also several groups of technicians working around her. This was out of Anya's area of understanding. She could only stand by the wall and watch silently.

But, she understood well the pain that Eco was feeling.

The cold voice was followed by its echo when it was reflected on the metal body.

"The cartridge has been filled. Prepare for launching."

"The countdown starts now. Ten, nine, eight... Three, two, one-."

"Launching compressed magic!"

A red beam shot out followed by a loud gun shooting sound. Anya felt that even the ship was vibrating.

"...!"

Then, there were air bubbles coming from Eco's mouth. If not because of the liquid she was in, her scream would definitely be heard.

Anya couldn't bear to see Eco suffering and looked away.

Eco's body had already taken at least ten shots of the compressed magic.

Eco regained her consciousness after the start of the experiment. At the beginning, she was struggling in the water, but 'Yggdrasill's' capsule was not at all affected.

After repeatedly receiving of dozens of compressed magic bolts, she lost her strength.

Right now, she is just like the living dead. Her blank eyes were now lifeless and it was terrible. It was pure torture. Even so, the group of researchers led by Dr. Hoffman were not at all shaken and continued silently.

"There is no significant change on the appearance of α . There are no abnormalities on her respiratory system. No magic fluctuation can be seen." Without realizing, the group of researchers started to refer Eco as α .

Eco is a human, a young dragon and also a living being—But this group of human had taken everything from her. To them, Eco was just experimental material α . Who knows if they want to remove their feeling of guilt by calling her with symbols... Anya secretly thought so.

At this moment, Dr. Hoffman's voice is heard by Anya.

"Still no changes... It seems like we don't have any more choices. Activate all the Millennium."

Anya turned pale when she heard that.

This means that they had decided to utilize full power on 'Yggdrasil'.

Part 2

"*Sob*... It was all... My fault. *Sob*..."

In the maid's bedroom on the ground floor of the palace.

Prim was lying on the bed with her pillow wet with tears.

Only Ash and Silvia beside her bed. Cosette was standing by the door outside the room.

Prim cried while she told them about the whole incident.

Prim arrived at the ancient palace when she was chasing Eco, who was emotionally distressed and running away.

She had met a few suspicious people there.

Seeing the enemy suddenly attack, Eco appeared and became the bait to let Prim escape.

When Prim regained conscious, Eco was no longer there.

After hearing, Ash felt something suspicious.

"Why did you go to the ancient palace?"

"That's because... It was my entire fault! It was my bad to say such things!"

"Prim" Silvia said patiently. "Please stay calm. Compared to you... Ash is the one suffering the most."

After being advised so by Silvia, Prim rubbed off her tears which started clearing up.

"You are right. Sorry..."

"Prim-san, please tell me everything before Eco was kidnapped!"

Prim nodded.

"I had no ill intention, it was just that... Ash-sama is a human and Eco is a dragon... So I thought that Eco would feel lonely after Ash-sama married with a human girl. The moment I told her that, Eco rushed out of the room."

"What...!"

Who would have thought of this, Ash was speechless.

"Idiot! You... Why do you have to tell her this!"

Silvia was mad.

"If I am Eco... I will definitely feel hurt if someone told that to me! Even when Eco is a dragon, her thoughts are still those of a very young girl's. She should know very well that her situation is special. Why was she born as a human? Why was she not born as a dragon... If I am Eco, I might even never feel secure."

"Princess..."

Ash looked on in surprise at Silvia who was able to keen Eco's thoughts.

"Recently, she had gotten used to the school life. She was also being loved by everyone as the student council's mascot. Even so, to Eco, the only person she could trust in... Is no other than Ash."

"And I... Have said something terrible..."

"Strictly speaking, Eco is still a young dragon who is not even a year old. Can't you be a little more indirect in your—"

"Forget it, Princess. Right now, we could never solve the problem even after lecturing Prim-san. What's more, if they had this planned, no matter what Prim-san said, Eco would still have been kidnapped."

"...You are right. But how are we going to rescue Eco?" Silvia nodded.

She was in agreement with Ash.

"Prim-san... Could you describe those people who attacked?"

Ash was praying while asking. His only clue is Prim being the witness.

"Err... They pretended to be the palace servants. But, they didn't look like citizens of the Knight Country. For their skin color, it looked like they are the Tantalos.... Also, the person who attacked me is a short girl."

"A Tantalos girl...!" Ash was feeling Déjà vu.

It was like he had found the last piece of puzzle in his memory.

"It was the girl who followed Milgauss!"

Ash's fists were shaking. The world he was seeing was dyed in red. Even though he only had a feeling that Milgauss was the culprit, still, after making sure, he was still in rage.

"Since we know who the criminal is-"

Silvia immediately stopped Ash who intended to rush out from the room.

"Hold on, Ash! Where do you think you are going to?"

"The ballroom, of course! I want to settle thing with Milgauss!"

"Keep your calm! Do you think that Milgauss will admit it even after you find and confront him?"

"...Maybe not."

Ash turned speechless.

Silvia was right, no matter how emotional he became, Eco still wouldn't be able to return safely."

Just as if she was trying to have Ash cooled down, Silvia made a suggestion in a calm voice:

"Don't you think that this is a good time to save Eco when Milgauss is busy with the masquerade?"

"What do you mean?"

"Milgauss couldn't even be bothered by an activity with long history such as this continental congress and will do anything just to capture Eco. Even when I don't know what his intentions are, but capturing Eco alive is their priority. I am sure that their lackeys won't do anything to harm Eco when the mastermind is absent."

After listening to Silvia's analysis, Ash gave a breath of relieve.

"The problem remains is, where is Eco's location. Since Ash's 'Seikoku' is not reacting, it means that Eco was being hidden in an enclosed place. For example something that could be a barrier to cut off magic... Anyway, it must be done with the proper equipment. It just can't be a rally point that they have just constructed."

"An enclosed place with proper equipment? That's it, Milgauss has Klaus backing him up..."

Last evening, an airship flew past the evening sky...

The black ship that was waving the Empire's flag proudly...

Ash remembered.

Ash and Silvia exchanged glances and shouted at the same time:

"Beowolf!"

Part 3

—W-Will... I die just like this...

Eco thought so.

The liquid in the capsule kept on rotating and Eco's body was being swept along by it.

Every time her shoulders or waist touches the glass, her body will move slowly in the opposite direction.

It seems like the liquid was made of special materials. Luckily, it doesn't affect her breathing. But after suffering a few shots from the magic device, her body turned numb.

This feeling is like an empty mind floating in mid air.

—If I could just... Continue sleeping... Then I won't feel any pain...

Just when Eco thought so... A power, that surpassed all the previous ones, was released upon her.

"Noooooooooooo...!"

Even though she thought that she shouted in pain, in truth they were just air bubbles coming out from her mouth.

A bright light flashes and the water churns rapidly. Just like being swallowed by a tsunami, her body kept on rotating and kept on hitting the glass around her.

—Wh... Why do I have to suffer this kind of pain.

It had passed the limit of her brain to just think of what they are going to do to her. She could only feel that her body had been injected with a vast amount of magic.

The pain she felt is just like her body being ripped open.

It felt like her organs were being messed up by someone.

-Urgh... It hurts.... It hurts.... I beg you all, please stop.

It is pointless no matter how she shouted in her mind, the magic was still being forced into the body. Eco's body was jerking nonstop and she was struggling.

You might as well do me a favor by killing me—Eco gave up.

"...!"

At the next moment- The Necromancia's slimy tentacles began attacking her from all directions.

Eco couldn't understand. Where did those tentacles appear from in this enclosed environment?

The tentacles, which were wriggling like snakes, slowly snatched her freedom.

Her arms, waist, legs... were entangled by those tentacles. -Stop! This must be an illusion! It is this device that was making me hallucinate...!

Eco tried to stay conscious and opened her eyes widely.

At that moment, the tentacles disappeared.

The feelings of being entangled by those tentacles also disappeared.

However, not long after that, she lost focus and the tentacles appeared again and had her waist was surrounded.

In a blink of an eye, she was lifted by those tentacles.

-Stop!



An abnormally thick tentacle was approaching Eco's face.

Eco kept her teeth closed with her might. If she was to be careless, the tentacle will surely wriggle into her mouth. Eco had Goosebumps just by think about it.

Eco initially wanted to ask for Ash's help. She hoped that he could save him from this hell.

However, from the point she woke up in this device, she couldn't even summon Ash.

Her Astral Flow with Ash had also been cut off.

The loss of her communication had put her in fear.

Eco was shocked that the loss of her connection with Ash would put her in such great fear.

—I am really an idiot. I only knew what is precious to me after I had lost it.

This experience had made her wanted to treasure Ash much more.

That's right, without Ash, I can't do anything... I am really a good for nothing.

-Don...

At that instant, there was something moving in her body.

Part 4

"Something is wrong! The magic indicator is showing an abnormal value!"

"We found an unknown magic source! Its power is increasing!"

"We have lost control of 'Yggdrasill'! It ignored the emergency stop signal!"

The continuous bad news had made Dr. Hoffman turn pale.

The laboratory was as if in a fire and a tense atmosphere was spreading.

All the technicians now carried a panicked look while they were busy dealing with the buttons and controls under their hands.

"What happened...?"

Anya who was looking from aside wondered.

Basically, there presently seemed nothing abnormal with Eco, who was in the capsule.

Even though she was shot by the high power compressed magic and had struggled like she was having a nightmare, yet nothing dramatic had happened.

But the indicator was still indicating an abnormal value. Also, they were losing control of 'Yggdrasill'.

The situation had suddenly become tense.

Even the emergency trigger had been triggered and the bell was ringing loudly.

-Dong!

At that instant, Anya heard something from the ground.

"What is that... Sound?"

As if to prove that it was not an illusion, 'Yggdrasill's' magic indicator exploded.

"Uwaa!"

Something groaned and then many of the surrounding devices started to explode with red flames. More of the technicians were now abandoning their posts, running away in fear.

"Don't panic! Keep calm!"

Dr. Hoffman shouted but not even a single soul was listening.

Because in everyone's sights was Eco.

Although she was still caged in the capsule. Eco's body was now glowing with a dim light.

Even Anya was captivated by the sight in front.

"Dr. Hoffman! Let's escape!" A young researcher advised Dr. Hoffman.

The rest of the researchers were agreeing with him and anxiously looked at Dr. Hoffman.

Anya left the wall and walk towards Dr. Hoffman's back.

"Dr. Hoffman, I also think that it would be wise if we escape now."

"No!" Dr. Hoffman yelled.

Anya was stunned by Dr. Hoffman's aura. She had thought of him as a kind old man and was forced to act cruel as a researcher. Who would know that he would have such a stubborn side.

"What are you thinking! Even an outsider like me knows that this is dangerous! Isn't there Millennium attached to that device too?"

What Anya was actually worried about is the existence of the Millenniums. Just in case the Millenniums explode... Anya was thinking. Let alone Beowolf, it is not even surprising if entire capital city of Fontain disappeared from the maps forever.

However, Dr. Hoffman shook his head slowly.

"...I won't. That will not happen. The energy in the Millenniums has run dry."

"What?"

"All the magic energy... Was fully absorbed by experimental material α ."

"-!"

Anya looked at Eco dumbstruck.

The intensity of Eco's light was getting stronger, past the level where one couldn't look at her directly. Those 'Dong' sounds had become clearer.

Even though there were no dangers of the Millennium exploding, it doesn't mean that they were free from danger. Eco right now is seen as the bomb.

Later, there was the loud sound of something breaking.

Different from the normal explosions, that explosion sounds like it was originated from something being applied pressure on.

" α ... α is escaping!"

A researcher shouted.

The capsule containing Eco was now in ruins and the liquid was flowing out like waterfall.

Eco can be seen floating with her eyes closed- in a short moment, she disappeared. What's left is only stardust like magic particles floating in the air.

"She... Disappeared...?"

Anya dumbstruck, murmured alone.

Part 5

"Hey... Somethings wrong with Beowolf!?"

When Maestro Lancelot reached the landing space at a height of twenty meters, Silvia shouted:

"That is...!"

Ash who was riding on Lancelot behind Silvia widened his eyes.

The sacred airship Esperanza, airship Crown Solas and air ship Silvanus were lined up together.

On the other hand, the huge airship Beowolf was parked quite some distance away from the trio.

The suspicious thing was the black smoke emerging from Beowolf.

Could it be a fire?

If Eco is inside... Ash was too scared to think about it.

"Urgh...!"

At this moment, Ash felt a burning sensation from his left hand.

Although he nearly screamed in pain, he managed to tolerate with it.

It felt like suddenly putting his hand into a furnace.

"Is everything alright, Ash!?"

Silvia was worried about him and turned around and asked, but Ash couldn't even reply because of the pain.

The 'Seikoku' engraved on his left arm was slowly moaning.

A while later, there was a glaring light coming out from his left arm and his sleeve up to his shoulders was burned off. Even the bandage was burned into pieces.

In a blink of an eye, Ash's 'Seikoku' on his left arm was exposed.

"Wha...!"

The 'Seikoku' on his hand was glowing with a different light intensity from time to time.

Ash was panicking.

It will be alright if it was just glowing but the heat and the pain sensations had no intention of stopping.

It felt that his left arm is going to explode anytime.

"Hey... What is actually happening?"

Silvia was in shock while holding the reins which was probably caused by the fright she experience from seeing Ash's 'Seikoku's' reaction.

"I don't know... But I am now sure that I am again connected to Eco!"

Just like responding to Ash's left arm, there was an object glowing in the sky.

"Ash! Look upwards!"

Silvia who noticed the abnormality was pointing at the sky. Ash too had noticed.

There was something glowing on the sky above the landing area.

"That is..."

The mysterious light was floating in the sky as if it was decorating it.

On the other hand, the full moon didn't look as charming as before.

By taking a closer look, it was an egg with beautiful flow lines.

There was a big emblem that was carved on the pearl like egg. At a first glance, it looked like a royal emblem.

To be more specific, that emblem looked like Ash's 'Seikoku'.

-Don... Don... Don...

There was a frighteningly deep beating sound from the egg.

The confusing part is, it moved with the same rhythm as the glow on Ash's 'Seikoku'.

Ash immediately understood.

"I couldn't be more wrong... Eco is in that egg!"

"How is that possible? What are you talking about...?"

"Princess, I beg you. Please take me there!"

"...Alright. I believe in you. Fly Lancelot! Fly higher!"

But Lancelot ignored her orders. It stayed at the twenty meters height and looked at the egg with its head up.

"Hei... Lancelot? Anything wrong? Fly immediately!"

Even though Silvia shouted strictly, Lancelot still ignored her orders. On the other hand, it did an emergency landing at a corner of the landing space.

"What are you doing? Are you disobeying my orders, Lancelot!"

"...It is useless, Princess. It seems that Lancelot has its own reason."

"What did you say?!"

Silvia looked at Ash with an imposing manner.

"Do you know what Lancelot was thinking?"

"...I am not sure. It was probably affected by the 'Seikoku'. I don't know why, but I could somehow understand what Lancelot was thinking."

After Ash and Silvia were forced to alight from Lancelot unwillingly, Lancelot again spread its wings and shoot up into the sky.

Looking at Lancelot's direction, Ash found out something important.

"Princess! There are more and more... Maestros gathering together!"

Groups of Maestros were gathering from all directions. It had become an amazing night view created by the light from the Maestro's magic.

One by one the Maestros appeared and gathered at the corner of the sky.

For Maestros, whose total numbers were already small to begin with, to gather together, it was unheard of even in the old times—

Part 6

"What is actually happening...?"

Lancelot left its master and flew off on its own.

Although this had given Silvia a great blow, the view of the night sky still gave her a deep impression.

Silvia could clearly hear the 'Pssshh' sounds of the beating of the wings.

When she had personally realized the dream like view, all her attention had been captured by it.

That egg even had wings growing out of it and feathers with silver lights were falling off. It was like snows that beautify the night sky.

Then- there was a crack from the egg shell.

The winged egg split into two-

[illegible]

A roar as if it was a horn announcing the end to the world could be heard all over.

Silvia who couldn't look straight into the glaring light closed her eyes. When she reopened her eyes, the winged egg was no longer there. It was replaced by something that was not of this world.

To describe this thing with a word will be either – GOD or DEVIL.

However what Silvia said was insulting.

"What a scary monster...!"



"Stop! You are not allowed to say that!"

Ash shouted and brought Silvia back o her sense.

"That must be...Eco. I can feel it... I can feel it!"

"Sorry, Ash..."

Although Silvia was annoyed by her gaffe, she still couldn't believe that it was Eco.

Later, Eco landed slowly while being surrounded by numerous Maestros.

Although the pink fur and the red eyes is similar to Eco, but her horns looked sharp and fierce and doesn't at all look like Eco's round stubs.

Also, there was a third horn in between the two horns. It was like a unicorn's horn and stood up straight.

Her wings, which were spread out widely, were different from a normal Maestro's. It made one think of an angel's wings.

Followed by a loud bang, Eco landed.

Eco lifted up her gigantic hind leg up high- And The large airship that had been the pride of the Empire was squashed in a few seconds.

With the conning tower being right at the middle, Beowolf had been squashed into a V shape and it immediately exploded.

Yet, Eco was not at all affected.

Eco probably lost interest in Beowolf and tried to wriggle her long neck. She slowly lowered her center of gravity.

The target of her scarlet eyes was the window of the tall Fontaine Palace.

Part 7

—An unidentified flying object appeared above the capital and all the Maestros in the country disobeyed their masters' orders and gathered together.

Veronica, who received the emergency report, brought Glenn, the captain of her escorts, along with her to the ballroom at the highest floor of the palace.

Anyway, there were important guests in the ballroom that gathered from all over the continent. No matter what happened, she must protect their safety in the name of the pride of the Knight's country.

At the same time, she must bring back her father Oswald with her. He had most probably changed his appearance and was drinking while mingling in the crowd.

While running on the long corridor, Veronica questioned Glenn:

"Did you too lose contact with your pal?"

"It totally ignored my summons and ignored my request to present me my Ark. From the looks of the current situation, where all the Maestros are gathering in the capital's sky, it probably has something to do with the unidentified flying object."

"Then, our pride, the Holy Draggers of Lautreamont can be considered no more. If the Empire attacked us at this moment, without the protection of the Maestros, this country will fall in just a single night."

For the inability to defend... "I don't have an excuse to offer." [26]

Glenn lowered his head somberly.

Part 8

When Veronica and Glenn arrived at the ballroom the palace music, along with the party atmosphere of the nobles, had disappeared.

Most of the guests were by the glass window and were looking downwards in shock. From there they can view the landing tarmac for the airships.

"That's...!"

Veronica was also looking downwards through the glass window.

"It is dangerous to stand beside the window, Princess!"

Glenn warned her but Veronica ignored him.

There was a change in the landing area.

A living object glowing with a silver light suddenly landed there.

-Uoooooooooooooooooooo...!

It was immediately followed by a loud roar that will make one feel like covering the ears.

It was stated in the previous report that 'an unidentified flying object that looked like a huge egg', but it seemed that the huge egg had hatched when Veronica was on her way.

The unbelievable thing is, that huge monster had easily split the Empire's huge airship Beowolf into two with just one stomp.

Right at this moment, there was a man from the crowd was making a fuss.

"Ooh, what is happening! How can a dragon of the Knight's... Destroy the Empire's most advance airship which is our country's pride! I don't think that this is some simple matter!"

The man's words caused an uproar in the ballroom.

Until a moment ago, everyone had just found out that this monster is a dragon.

Talking about a dragon, everyone will think about Lautreamont Knight Country.

"Is that person... Klaus Viderhausen! He is obviously trying to cause a stir!"

Veronica angrily scolded and glared at the Empire's young noble.

However, there was a man who stupidly tried to argue with Klaus.

"Nonsense! That monster had nothing to do with our country!"

Although the man was wearing a lion shaped mask, judging from his plum body, Veronica immediately knew who he is.

He is her father, Oswald.

"Klaus-dono! This is the truth! That monster has nothing to do with us! Please believe in me!"

"Hu... What you said was not at all convincing. Anyway, everyone here is a witness."

Klaus was not even bothered by Oswald.

It was because what Klaus said is true. A huge dragon that suddenly appeared and with no warning had destroyed the Empire's airship right in front of everyone here.

Nothing could be worst than this.

Chevron Kingdom and Zepharos Empire, who had never see each other eye to eye, were originally going to discuss about furthering peace between them in tomorrow's continental congress 'Elysium'.

To Chevron Kingdom and its ally Lautreamont Knight Country this should be a historical event.

"Stop... Let alone the Emperor, not even one royal from the Empire attends. It is a total joke. The Empire has never wanted peace—"

Just as Veronica finished her sentence, there were people screaming from everywhere.

Everyone was in a panic.

All the guests who were wearing their mask, everyone, including the musicians and the waiters, were trying to escape.

Apart from Oswald, who was now crying, Klaus, who had just previously put the blame on the Knight Country, was also fleeing.

"What...!"

Veronica who immediately turned around was also sweating tremendously.

There was a pair of scarlet eyes looking into one of the many palace windows.

She spent a few seconds to figure out that the dragon had stretched its neck and was looking into Fontaine Palace.

"Glenn, if I try to slash the pair of eyes with my huge sword... Do you think I have any chance of winning?"

"Please forgive my rudeness... Even if Princess... You are no match for it."

Glenn told the truth directly.

"Why must you be this honest?"

Veronica was sulking while she confronted the dragon eyes.

The round eyes.

It looked like a baby's pairs of eyes. Although it looked naïve, if this monster just rubbed its nose on the palace walls... Fontaine Palace will turn into dust in seconds. Furthermore, it will be a hill full of bricks and corpses... Veronica could still manage a smile.

Even though she was thinking of such scenario.

"Kuku... So this is of feeling of my life being controlled by others. I praise you, my child!"

Seeing that Veronica had no intention of escaping, Captain Glenn advised her in panic:

"Princess, please retreat!"

"I mustn't. Some of the guests are still here."

Veronica looked around the empty ballroom.

There was a man with a mask standing at the middle of the dance floor.

The man was wearing a elegant suit. However his hair color was like a cloth stained with blood.

He is obviously the guy in the reports— Milgauss.

Veronica looked at him in admiration.

"Hmm... You indeed look a little like Julius. Remove your mask!"

To her surprise, he actually did it. He could be seen silently removing his mask and threw it to a side as if he doesn't need it anymore.

"-!"

Veronica's eyes widened.

The handsome face beneath the mask was undoubtedly Julius of ten years later who had now become a seinen.^[27]

He no longer had the rebellious feel with him in his teenage years and was replaced by a feeling of a weapon that had been well polished.

"So you are Julius...!"

As if to sweep away her worries, Julius walked to the side of the window. At the same time, the dragon's face disappeared as if it had lost interest with the empty ballroom.

Julius was standing by the window looking at the huge dragon.

"Kukuku... I have been waiting for this moment for a long time!"

That sinful voice and the devil like smile made Veronica feel uneasy.

Glenn took a step forward as if trying to ask on behalf of Veronica.

He unsheathed his sword that was on his waist.

"You can't be Julius, no? My friend would never show such a malicious smile."

"Oh, Glenn McGuire! I remembered you are one of the guys that appeared in Julius's memories. It should be suitable to use 'it has been a long time' in this situation, don't you think so?"

"What do you mean!"

"You still don't get it? This body is indeed Julius's. However, I am not Julius... Although I can peek into Julius's memories anytime."

"What is happening...?"

Veronica was curious but it was not bothered by the man.

"Kneel! Quick! Look carefully! You are witnessing a historical moment!"

The man was acting like a holy man in the religious painting. He spread his arms widely and declared his name.

"I am Mordred! The descendant of the Nehalennia's dark dragons' king's family."

Veronica couldn't believe what she had just heard.

The Maestro that Julius sacrificed his life to kill is named Mordred. It is also Julius's Pal.

Is it possible that Mordred has taken over Julius's body?

In regards of Nehalennia's dark dragons' king's family— Veronica had only recently heard about this name.

The 'Old Testament of the Stella Biblia' that Dr. Angela Cornwell found in Willingham Mausoleum.

Basically, Veronica had read through the copy of the book.

She recalled a part of the book.

"...After the wise dragon Inbroke, two major bloodlines were formed. They are the Avalon's holy dragons emperor family and the Nehalennia's dark dragons king family. An endless war started between these two families. After the members of the two families reincarnated, they will encounter each other, hate each other and kill each other."

The person in front had introduced himself as the descendant of the Nehalennia's dark dragons' king's family.

Then, who is the person who should be representing the descendant of the Avalon's holy dragons' emperor's family-?

At this moment, Veronica stopped thinking because of Glenn's shout.

"So I see... You are the root of evil! I knew that Julius didn't turn crazy! He will always be loyal to his beliefs and tried to have you removed even when he had to commit a crime in the Knight Country!... Return Julius to us!"

Followed by a shout, Glenn reduced their distance and there was a silver flash.

However, Mordred easily parried Glenn's slash.

"Urgh!"

Glenn growled.

Mordred had stopped the high speed slash with only his index and middle finger.

Glenn could be seen standing still while holding his sword. No, that's not the case, Veronica understands well.

It was not that Glenn was not moving, it was because that he was unable to move.

Mordred had overpowered Glenn with just two fingers.

"Hmph... I will let you experience the punishment for being disobedient to a god." Mordred gave a cold smile

Immediately after, there was a flash.

"Gwaaa!"

Glenn was knocked up into the air while unable to even resist. He knocked into the wall hard and became unconscious.

Veronica didn't even have the time to care about Glenn and stared at Mordred.

"...I don't understand. As far as I know, you should have a good relationship with Julius. Didn't you even present him with an ark?"

"Hmph, the one who has a good relationship with Julius is another me. That me who acknowledged Julius as its master and associated with him quite well."

"Another me? What are you talking about?"

"Let me generously explain it to you as your last gift before you die. There were two personalities in Mordred. If it was to be a human, it would be called a split personality."

"What happened to the other personality?"

"It has disappeared together with the body. Ironically, although it was itself, Julius had originally planned to kill me. For my part, to prevent myself from dying, I sacrificed my body and changed into this spiritual form and inhabited Julius's body."

Upon saying that, Mordred looked out of the window.

Right beside the palace, the dragon was standing on its hind legs and was looking around curiously. It seemed to be troubled because it couldn't understand what was happening.

Mordred declared to that dragon:

"Descendant of the Avalon's holy dragons' emperor's family, I will take that body of yours!"

"Now I understand, so this is what you planned...!"

At this stage. Veronica finally found out what Mordred is aiming for.

Mordred had once lost his body in the past when it was killed by Julius.

However, if it could take over the body of the descendant of the Avalon's holy dragons' emperor's family, it can once again be born as the strongest dragon...!

"That will never happen, Mordred!"

Veronica unsheathed the huge sword on her waist.

Even though she knew that he was not an opponent that she could win in a direct confrontation, she still couldn't bear to watch idly from the side.

I will kill Mordred together with Julius's body before he can manage to take over Avalon's body- Veronica rushed forward while thinking.

Even when it's her brother's body that we are dealing with... She had no intention of showing any mercy.

But, before Veronica could land a hit on Mordred, suddenly, there was darkness emerging from his body and spread all over the ballroom.

"Urgh... What is this dark mist... My conscious...!"

The moment she was surrounded by the darkness, Veronica felt a strong feeling of vomiting and fainting.

Part 9

After struggling for some time in the darkness—without knowing what was happening— The darkness had finally disappeared.

"Are you alright, Veronica?"

There was a guy who held out his hand to Veronica who was struggling to stand up.



"You...!"

There was killing intent in Veronica's eyes.

To her surprise; Mordred, who should be busy with taking over Avalon's descendent's body, is attempting to help her up.

However, there was no longer evilness on his face.

"You... Could you be Julius?"

"Ahh, that is me. You are still the same old you for not calling me 'Anii-ue'."

It seemed that, because Mordred was gone, Julius was able to take back his body.

"Of course... You F.O.O.L"

Upon hearing that Julius smiled, but he immediately returned back to his serious expression.

"Sorry, but now is not the time for us siblings to be arguing. Mordred's spirit has already inhibited Eco's body. We have the obligation to defeat Mordred and protect this city."

At that instant, Veronica felt a pain from her head as if she had just been struck.

"Hold on! Did you just say Eco? That huge dragon... is actually Eco?"

"I will explain the details to you later. Can you stand up?"

"Hmph... Whom do you think you are talking to!"

Using the huge sword as a walking stick, Veronica put all her effort into standing up. But, it was probably the side effect of inhaling in the darkness, in the end, she fell down again.

"Princess!"

The person who reached Veronica first was Glenn. Although he was badly injured, he had regained consciousness.

Glenn held on to Veronica and glared at Julius.

"Julius... I have numerous things that I want to tell you, but please allow me to tell you this first."

"I can guess what you want to say but be my guest."

While facing the calm Julius, Glenn, with mixed feelings, shouted to Julius:

"You... Damn you!"

Part 10

Seeing that the Empire's airship was easily crushed, the sacredship Esperanza and magicship Crown Solas flew off immediately.

Only the magicship Silvanus remained at its location overlooking the whole incident.

Although Silvanus had yet to attack Eco, Ash was still worried since it's captain is Veronica.

Even so, seeing that Silvanus still hasn't made its decision, Veronica was probably not aboard the ship. They were most probably waiting for Veronica's orders.

On the other hand, if Veronica had boarded the ship, there is a high chance that she will issue an attack on Eco. To protect the capital, Veronica will make this decision without any hesitation. Anyway, Silvanus' fire power is not something that can be ignored.

"I... I will protect Eco!"

Ash made up his mind and rushed forward.

"Hold on, Ash. Do you want to be crushed!"

Silvia blocked Ash with her arms spread.

"Please move aside, Princess! Who will protect Eco if I don't!"

"Please keep your calm! Even so, what can you do!? How are you going to ride Eco who has just turned into... that? What's more, what are you going to do to ride on Eco?"

"I..."

Silvia was right. During the time when the Necromancia attacked Ansarivan, he received help from Silvia and Lancelot.

But luck was not on his side. Lancelot who he could place his hope on had not yet returned after it gathered with the rest of the Maestros. The group of Maestros were still circling above in the sky while waiting for something to happen.

To his relief, after Eco crushed Beowolf, she had not made any frightening actions. Although Ash was sweating tremendously during the time she looked into Fontaine Palace through the window, he was lucky that she turned away immediately.

Right now, Eco was only looking around and sniffing the buildings around her as if to figure out what was happening. In regards to what had happened to her body, she probably hasn't figured it out yet.

"In conclusion, we must keep her as far from the town as possible. In the case that she enters into the town..."

Upon listening to Silvia's assumption, Ash was shaking in fear.

Fontaine City has a population of around a million.

In another words, a million lives were now in Eco's hands.

The severity of the current situation no longer only involved Ash and Eco.

"Guooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooo...!"

At that moment, Eco was roaring in pain and started to struggle. There was a change in her appearance that was originally surrounded by a silver light.

Just like a white cloth that came in contact with ink, a black color was slowly taking over the white.

"...Eco? What's happening!"

Ash could only look on as Eco transformed, without being able to do anything.

The change in her skin was only the start.

Her angle like feathers had transformed into a crow like wings.

The previous middle horn of the three horns had disappeared and her pair of horns had turned into spiral shape.

Also, her four limbs were growing at a fast speed. It will be better to describe her as a giant like body rather than a huge beast. That huge body gave a evil feeling.

Last of all, there were nine eyes on its face where each was glowing with red light.

"Nine eyes...!"

Ash remembered something.

Eco once had a nightmare.

In her dream, was Eco attacked by the nine eyed dragon...?

-Don!

At that moment Eco, who had turned into that black dragon, gave out a real dragon breath.

The flame emitted pierced the sky and scattered the dark clouds.

If this flame were aimed at Fontaine Palace or the town... Ash felt Goosebumps just by thinking of it.

"Silvia, so you are here!"

At this moment, there was a fierce voice coming from behind.

It was Veronica and Glenn when they turned around.

Glenn was badly injured and looked more like an old rag.

Apart from that— There was another man following Veronica.

It was already surprising if a person was allowed to walk side by side with Veronica, yet it was far more surprising when they noticed the man's hair color.

"Milgauss! Why are you here!"

Ash felt that he was having more Goosebumps all over his body. At the same time, he felt that Milgauss looked familiar. He remembered that he had seen that face in a portrait.

"Are you... Anii-ue?!"

Silvia shouted before Ash.

"Yeah. Although it is a little hard to believe, I am Julius. But I don't have the time to give you any explanations right now. Firstly, we need to get rid of Mordred's spirit from Eco's body— Ash..."

When his name was suddenly called by Julius, Ash became nervous.

The person in front of him really felt like Prince Julius Lautreamont.

Julius stepped forward and placed his hand on Ash's shoulder.

"Only you, as Eco's master, can save her. Understood?"

"Yes. I thought of that myself too."

Julius smiled.

"Good answer. I will take the responsibility to bring you to Eco."

"But... How are you going to do it?"

"Don't worry. We have a way for that."

After he finished his sentence, Julius was actually pointing at... The Magicship Silvanus was resting at the far end of the landing area.

Part 11

"Ara. I don't remembered inviting you here... Dark Dragon King Mordred."

In the dragon workshop, Navi and Mordred were having a confrontation. She was sitting on her favorite chair with her legs crossed.

"Kuku. This is your last time to be able to be this relaxed."

Mordred's spirit had still maintained Julius's voice. It was probably because it had inhabited Julius's body for more than ten years... At least Navi thought so.

"I have taken over sixty percent of Eco's body. It is only a matter of time before I can fully take control of her body. Avalon is losing."

"..."

"Next, if I can fuse together with you, I can be fully awakened as the Dark Dragon King. Follow me. Even though you are now called Navi... But... I

clearly know that you are not a normal navigator. You are the incarnation of the Dragweiss."

"Ara. Just what I imagined of the Dark Dragon King. You have made quite some investigations on your own."

"Fuse with me quickly. Give me the supreme knowledge. Strictly speaking, Avalon and Nehalennia have the same roots... I should also be qualified to fuse with you."

"I don't disagree with this."

Upon hearing Navi's answer, Mordred smiled.

"So you agree?"

"No I don't. It is because I don't like Nehalennia."

"...What do you say?"

"I'm rooting for Avalon's Imperial Princess and her knight. Especially her knight... Ash Blake, he is far manlier than you."

"Hmph... what a fox you are. Since it has come to this... I will use force-"

Suddenly, there were numerous tentacles coming from under Mordred's legs. They were like snakes that had found their prey and attacked Navi.

Part 12

"I am sorry. Could everyone apart from Ash and I leave this ship?"

Upon stepping into Silvanus's wheelhouse, Julius spoke coldly.

The crew—responsible for the control of the wheel, communications and the rest—turned around and looked Julius in confusion. Then they are all suddenly frightened, as is they see a ghost.

They shouldn't be blamed since the prince, that should have been executed years ago, was standing in front of them and had asked them to do something unreasonable.

"Hold on... Prince Julius! What do you plan to do?"

Seeing that Ash was requesting an explanation, at the same time Julius answered, he turned around and looked at Veronica who was preparing to sit on the captain's seat.

"I just don't want the rest of the people to die with us. Veronica, I hoped that you could also help me by giving out the orders."

"Do you think that I would even listen to that joke?"

"If the sister is stubborn, the elder brother will have to face some trouble."

The next instant, with lightning speed, Julius seized Veronica from behind. He was holding a hidden gun. It was a mechanical gun that the military of the Empire used.

Julius even chose to place the tip at Veronica's temple.

"There is not much time. You should try to listen to your brother sometimes, Veronica."

"Are you kidding! Silvanus is my magicship. Don't even think of always doing what you wanted to, Julius."

"As I have said before, I am your brother. Maybe you are a perfect princess in front of our people, but I knew your Achilles heel. If you still disobey me, I will expose it in front of everyone."

"What Achilles heel?"

"I know that you love Silvia. There are Silvia portraits in your room. The clothes that Silva wore, Silvia's growth record, the poem that you wrote from missing Silvia and also Silvia's human sized doll—"

"I- I promise! Keep quite immediately!"

Ash was in a shock. He had never expected Veronica to surrender easily.

"Everyone, leave the ship immediately! This is an order from Veronica Lautreamont! No one is allowed to disobey!"

It was a direct order from Princess Veronica-sama... All the crew members rushed out from the wheelhouse.

When everyone had left the magicship, Julius operated Silvanus while sitting on the pilot's seat.

With a sudden shake of the magicship, Ash held tightly onto the communication officer's former seat to avoid falling on the floor. Looking out through one of the round cockpit windows, the magicship was rising further and further away from the ground.

It was a totally different experience from sitting on a dragon. When this lump of metal was flying with passengers— At the same time Ash was amazed, he also started to worry about crashing.

Julius, while he was piloting Silvanus, started telling Ash the whole story.

Part 14

Although what Julius said was hard to believe, basically, the dragons were separated into the Avalon's holy dragons' emperor's family and the Nehalennia's dark dragons' king's family. The two families had incarnated since the ancient times and are still fighting each other right unto this day.

Also, Eco is Avalon's holy dragons' emperor's family's descendant.

In another words, Eco is the Imperial Princess of the dragons.

"...Even after I had heard of such things, it is still hard for me to believe this. Eco, who has been living with me, is obviously a girl who sleeps late, a glutton and a hot headed girl..."

"I know how you feel. When I found out that my pal is the descendant for the Nehalennia's dark dragons' king's family, I was also astounded. In the beginning, I was also troubled by why was I chosen."

Julius spoke on.

"Back to the topic, Avalon's Imperial Princess's body is really huge. Even though she is still a young dragon, she had this unbelievably huge size... It is totally unbelievable."

After Julius pressed a few buttons on the dashboard, Eco's body was shown on the huge screen in front.

Silvanus was three hundred meters above land and was looking at Fontaine city from the sky above.

From the screen, they can see Eco's back that had turned black because of being taken over by Mordred.

With its frightening spiral horns and nine eyes... It is exactly the image of the dark dragon king.

Eco, who was originally standing on two legs, was now standing on all four because of the pain caused by Mordred's take over.

The worrying part is, Eco was not moving at all and yet she doesn't look as if she is sleeping...

"Could it be that Eco is fighting Mordred?"

Julius shook his head in disagreement.

"It is impossible. Judging from the huge change of her body, I am afraid that... Eco doesn't even have the strength to fight back."

"Is it..."

"But not all hope is lost. In my opinion, Navi is also fighting against Mordred."

"Navi?"

Why would he mention Navi's name at such a time?

Before that, how would Julius know about Navi?

"Navi is the incarnation of the Dragweiss. If Navi could keep on fighting back, even after Mordred has fully taken over Eco's body, he still couldn't be fully awoken."

"What do you mean?"

"Regardless of the Avalon's holy dragons' emperor or the Nehalennia's dark dragons' king, both of them must fuse with the Dragweiss to obtain its supreme knowledge, only then can they receive their true power. I believe that Mordred right now is trying his best to make Navi his own."

"How come... you know so much about him?"

"That was because I shared the same body with Mordred. Just like what he did to me, to blend into the human society, I could also look into his memories."

After hearing what Julius had said, Ash was still confused. However, there exists things that could be easily understood without the need for good brains.

"In another words, this is a great time for a counter attack while Mordred is busy dealing with Navi, right?"

"That's right. This is our only chance for victory. If you can ride on Eco, by chasing Mordred's spirit out, then you can save Eco and the capital together."

Ash nodded in agreement to what Julius had said.

"I am willing to give it a try. No matter if it is Avalon or Nehalennia... I don't think I even know what they mean. I only know that Eco is my pal."

When Ash turned around and prepared to walk back to the hatch, Julius spoke from behind:

"Although I don't know why you were chosen... But I am glad that you are Eco's knight."

Part 15

"Urgh..."

Ash arrived at the hatch and found that the winds were cold. Such temperatures were unheard of during the summer.

Ash was carrying a parachute— This is a decision made by Julius and him beforehand.

When Silvanus had come close to Eco, Ash will jump off from the deck with the help of the parachute.

After landing, it's all up to Ash.

Basically, Ash had gone through the parachute landing practices at the academy.

Ash had never intended to become a soldier and had always thought that the academy was wrong to force them to go through those kinds of practices.

Anyway. The academy is not a military school— But who would've expected that those practices would be useful right now.

"...Right there."

Ash was looking down towards the ground from the bow and had located Eco's back.

Although her fur had turned black the enormous amount of magic surrounding her were shooting off strong rays of light, he won't have to worry about missing his target.

He must make use of the time that Navi was fighting against Mordred to land on Eco's head.

Julius voice emerged from the magic communication device:

"Ash, you may jump anytime."

"Roger that."

Ash looked downwards for one more time.

For such a huge beast, her only blind spot will be her head.

Ash tried to imagine himself riding on Eco's head.

To his surprise, it was not at all scary.

The 'Seikoku' on his left arm was getting warm and was flickering with dim light.

It felt as if his 'Seikoku' was urging him to move quickly.

Suddenly- Eco lifted her neck and shot a dragon breath towards Silvanus.

"...Urgh!"

A bright light pierced through the night sky. Ash surrendered against the shaking deck and fell down. Although Julius had barely avoided a direct hit, by giving the ship an emergency turn, the strong breath had burned one side of the ship into ashes.

There was smoke and fire emerging from the ship itself and it had begun to falter as it lost balance.

"Tsk...! If you kill me, Eco will die too! If that happens, you also couldn't get your hands on Eco's body that you desired that much...! How could someone be this stupid?"

When Ash was groaning, Julius voice could be heard once again through the communication machine:

"Ash, are you alright!"

"Yes, I am!"

"Silvanus is going to do an emergency landing! Jump quickly!"

"I also intend to do that!"

Ash clenched his teeth and jumped off from the deck.

The moment his feet left the deck, Mordred gave a second dragons breath.

Looking backwards, he saw that Silvanus's fuselage suffered a direct hit from the dragon breath.

Ash shuddered. He was lucky that he had jumped off earlier or else he would be turned into dust also.

Although Julius had said there were going to do an emergency 'landing', judging from the speed Silvanus was moving downwards, it looked like it was crashing.

Finally, the unbalanced ship disappeared at the other end of the palace walls- Then a fire pillar could be seen followed by a loud explosion.

"Prince Julius...!"

Ash was sad but there was nothing he could do about it.

Julius had risked his life to fly him into the night sky.

The only thing he can do right now is to complete his mission in return.

Ash's body was moving downwards because of gravity's pull.

His face and ears felt like being crushed by the rushing air pressure.

"Now is the time!"

Ash had got the timing right and pulled the rip cord, the parachute spread open.

An amazing braking force had caused the parachute to slow down.

If another dragon breath was shot off, Ash would certainly be hit but Ash prayed that he will not have such bad luck.

"Wait for me, Eco. I will protect you... I swear!"

Part 16

"Damn! Where am I?"

Eco found out that she was in a cage when she woke up. When she was looking at her body, she found out that she was wearing a dress with low standards.

This style is obviously not of Eco's preference.

Any dress in Fontaine Palace's changing room looked better than this. It is even as heavy as lead and it felt more like a binding item rather than an evening dress.

On the other side of the cage was a wide white space. The walls, the floor and the ceiling were white. Not even a speck of dust that could be found.

"How dare anyone to cage a dragon like me in this cage... What were they even thinking!?"

Eco was definitely confused. Yet she still vaguely remembered that she was awakened as a dragon. She even remembered that she had become huge and was looking at the whole of Fontaine palace.

But her memories stopped there.

"Tsk... It seems that you are alright since you are so energetic even in such a situation as this."

It was a familiar voice.

"Navi? You...!"

Navi was standing outside of the cage. Even though Eco disliked Navi, but in such a situation, Eco was grateful that Navi was here and felt that Navi was like an angel.

The Eco's angel was now looking like a rag-doll.

Navi, who was always acting calm and give out a noble like feeling, was now seen with mussed up hair and even her evening dress was in rags. All over her body were the marks of being bound.

"What happened? This doesn't look like you at all..."

Eco was taking a closer look at Navi.

"Hmm... I am only accompanying Mordred in his game. It was just that, his tentacle fetish has given me some trouble!"

"Mordred? Who is that?"

"Please lend me your hand."

Eco stretched her hand through the gaps between the bars of the cage. After Navi held her hand, a mass amount of knowledge flowed into her brain.

In a blink of an eye, Eco knew everything that had happened. Only now did she realize that she is in her spiritual from.

"To make it simple... That person called Mordred is trying to take over my body, right?"

"That's right. Anyway, during the time I was running around, he had done nothing bad. But if it's to destroy this capital, it will be an easy task for him."

"Hmm... So I am such a great dragon."

According to Navi's information, Eco is Avalon's Imperial Princess.

"Huhu. Now Ash is going to look at me differently."

Seeing that Eco was feeling proud, Navi sighed.

"As long as he can survive. He seems to be doing something foolhardy again."

Navi held Eco's hand again and Eco closed her eyes.

That current situation was sent into Eco's brain as projections.

"What...!"

Eco was speechless.

Under the night sky- Ash leaned out from Silvanus's deck.

The next instant, Mordred gave a dragon breath to the ground.

Silvanus was hit and was now gliding down from the sky, as if it was a paper plane.

On the other hand, Ash jumped into the air and was falling with his head pointing downwards.

"Hold on... Is he crazy!?"

At that moment, Eco clearly heard Ash's mumble.

"Wait for me, Eco. I will protect you... I swear!"

In a short moment, tears started to flow from her eyes. Even though she was a spirit, her tears still kept on flowing. Even the Dragweiss couldn't give an explanation. A warm feeling was haunting her heart... What was that feeling?

"Why...Why? Why would he... try to do so many things for me? Even when I... Have caused many, many troubles for him?"

Navi stretched her hand into the cage and patted her head.

"Do you even have to ask? It is because you are his pal."

Eco rubbed off her tears and lifted her head.

"Navi, please tell me what can I do for him."

"Teehee. That's more like it."

Navi smiled and waved her hand lightly. With a flash, the cage disappeared. At the same time, the black dress that limits Eco's movement was broken into particles and a pure white evening dress was revealed from beneath.

In a short time, Navi removed Mordred's seal.

"I must say that... You are very good."

Eco was scoping out her dress. Its design compromised of the elements of elegance and purity. It is as if it was made to be worn by the Avalon's Imperial Princess.

"No matter how great I am, I can't help you with the upcoming step. Understood?"

Eco nodded in reply.

"Then, what should I do?"

After Navi smiled, she cheekily said:

"Of course you are to present him your originally made Ark and the Avalon's Imperial Princess."

The next instant, Eco became confused.

"What? Are you serious?"

As if it was natural to do so, Navi nodded without any hesitation.

"All the mimics that you have created, for various emergencies in the past... are useless against Mordred."

"But, how, am I supposed to do this impossible task!?"

An original Ark could not be completed easily.

It was because Eco had seen her ancestor's blueprint; she understands how hard it can be. An Ark is not only a strong magic weapon, at the same time, it is also a perfect art masterpiece.

Not to mention that Eco was still a young dragon that was not even a year old without any experience. Navi's suggestion was like asking a baby to build a palace.

"Anyway, it would not be called difficult if the blueprint could be easily created."

Eco gave up before she even started but Navi ignored it.

"Rest assured, you must believe in your own ability. You are an Imperial Princess who is the blood descendant of Avalon."

"But... But what we must think about is not only the armour itself, there is also the Ark-weapon..."

"Listen carefully, the shape itself doesn't matter. It is the mental power of the creator that decides the strength of the Ark. Even if you don't know the shape, as long as you focus, the shape of the Ark will be formed."

"Really...?"

"Yeah. Also, you don't have to worry about the Ark-weapon. Avalon has a treasured sword that's been passed down through the generations. Just use it."

After a moment of silent, Eco mumbled:

"...I had always disliked you since the first time I met you. Regardless of your relaxed attitude or your looks that was similar to mine or your overly large breast... I hate them and hate them very much! However... It's funny in the way that I felt you're trustable."

Eco lifted her head and smile.

Navi also returned a smile.

At the same moment, Eco felt that a light had pierced through that darkness that had been blocking her eyes.

She didn't want to look for trouble anymore.

And she definitely doesn't want to give in before taking up the challenge.

While the evening dress was swaying, Eco spoke with confidence:

"Just wait and see. I will definitely complete my original Ark!"

Part 17

"Damn... What kind of joke is this!"

Although Ash had finally landed on Eco— Still... the landing spot was her back and not her head. It was exactly beside the joints between the body and the wings.

That same pair of wings were like the wings of a new born bird. They are still wet and unable to fly right away.

Maybe this is my only life saver... Ash secretly thought.

Black fur was growing from her uneven skin. It felt like a Necromancia. He must get rid of Mordred's spirit and return Eco to her original appearance as soon as possible.

To achieve this, he must try to ride her gigantic body. However... Ash was looking at Eco's head from afar.

Connected to her back, that was as wide as prairie, was a long neck that looked as if it was a stairway climbing up to heaven. And her head, with the spiral horns, was at the other end of that neck.

His current aim was to ride on her head and try to control her using his will as a dragner. However... The distance between them was huge. It was like trying to climb the dangerous Xenoglavia Mountains without any climbing tools.

"Stop it! ...This is not the time to give up."

Ash threw aside the parachute and moved forward while pushing aside the fur that was taller than himself.

"Now I really looked like a louse..."

In reality, Mordred treated Ash as nothing but a louse. That is why he was not bothered by Ash at all.

"Just wait and see. Your overconfidence will be the cause of your death, Mordred..."

Although Ash kept on talking to himself to boost his confidence, but every time he looked towards her head, he felt like falling apart.

Suddenly, there was a change in the night sky.

Those Maestros, who were originally circling in the sky, started to make their move.

Those Maestros could be seen gliding towards Mordred and had him surrounded.

"Grrrrrrrrrrrr..."

Mordred lifted his neck and gave a threatening growl. However, before he even managed an attack, the Maestros activated their magic all at the same time.

With a flash, chains that were made from magic appeared. Numerous chains now tied down the huge dragon's neck, front legs, hind legs, tail...

"Guuuoooooooooooooooooooooo...!"

Mordred was struggling with all his might but the chains wouldn't budge even a little.

"They...!"

It can't be wrong. These Maestros were trying to seal Mordred's movement. Who knows if they were thinking that the dragon worthy to take to top is not Mordred but Eco.

At that moment, a Maestro landed right in front of Ash. Its pair of horns looking like a deer's, also looked familiar to Ash. Then a clear voice could be heard coming from behind the dragon.

"Ash... Hurry up!"

"Lucca!? Why are you here?"

That is. The Maestro that suddenly appeared from above was Gawain, and Lucca was riding on its back. Ash felt nostalgic.

Lucca while feeling worried gave Ash a short explanation.

"Err... The Maestros in the dragon house seven were all escaping together. I risked my life to cling onto Gawain... In the end, I found out that I was already here."

"Did Rebecca and Max come together?"

Lucca shook her head. It was probably Ash's mistake that he felt that Lucca's ears were slightly drooping.

"Only I noticed that something was going on with the Maestros..."

"Is that so..."

As if to interrupt Ash's and Lucca's conversation, Gawain roared with its jaws opened.

It was as if trying to tell Ash to ride on it quickly. Ash naturally didn't reject this offer.

"Thank you!"

Just as Ash sat on Gawain's back, Gawain flapped its wings.

After piercing through the night sky, Gawain's altitude was increasing while following along the direction of Mordred's neck. Lucca's riding skills were as good as ever and could only be described as perfect.

Ash was clinging tightly to Lucca's thin waist to avoid from dropping off.

However, Mordred would not stay silent. Although he was being tied down, it was still struggling and roaring loudly.

Suddenly, magic cannons continued to appear in the sky and were firing at Gawain.

Ash was trembling when he saw those cannons.

It was because those cannons looked like the weapon that Ash used during his fight with Milgauss in Willingham Mausoleum. The only difference is, each cannon was around Gawain's size.

"Magic shield Aegis...!"

"Need not worry... It will be alright as long as we are not hit."

Lucca was not at all shaken.

As if she had fused with Gawain, she was controlling Gawain by moving left and right and dangerously avoided the crossing light rays.

Gawain even used its dragon breath and one by one the magic canons were destroyed.

When Gawain had successfully passed Mordred's head, all the magic cannons had disappeared.

"Ash, nows the time...!"

Just when Lucca shouted, Gawain did a somersault.

At the point where the sky was upside down, Ash jumped down.

He drew a big locus in the night sky and successfully lands in between the two horns. Looking from a close distance, the horns looked more like an altar than a horn.

When his feet landed on that spot, he felt satisfied. It was probably his dragner's intuition that told him this is the best riding spot.

"Listen carefully Eco!"

Ash was shouting with all his might at his 'Seikoku' that was connected to Eco:

"Right now, I am going to ride you! I swear I will be successful in riding you! Whether you are an Imperial Princess or not it has nothing to do with me! So what if you are an imperial princess? You are always bad tempered, try to solve anything with force, a sleepy head, only have crepes in your eyes and feel like wanting to bite greedily whenever you see meat. Are these what an Imperial Princess should do! Even if you really are an Imperial Princess, I will never approve it!... I only know that—I am your knight, and you are my pal. Things are just as simple as this!"

The next instant, there was a change in his left arm that was dense with 'Seikoku'.

The 'Seikoku' can be seen emitting rays of light that were able to light up the entire night sky. Then patterns started to crawl just like some living things.

No, the patterns were growing.

"W-What had happened...?"

Just when Ash was feeling confused, his 'Seikoku' started to spread outwards towards Ash entire body with his left arm as the starting point.

Ash found that his connection with Eco had become stronger.

Although he couldn't communicate with Eco verbally, yet, he was sure that he was connected to Eco...!

But, Ash's thinking only lasted for a short moment.

"Guuuuuuuoooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooo...!"

Mordred was back on the move. He had broken one of the chains and was standing on two legs.

"Auuu...!"

Lucca groaned. The wind created when Mordred stood up had affected Gawain. Although it was not blown away by the wind, it was obvious that it could not retain its balance. However, Lucca shouted:

"Don't worry about me... I am alright! Ash, just focus on saving Eco...!"

Then, Lucca and Gawain finally fall back and disappeared from Ash's line of sight.

"Lucca...!"

Ash stretched his arm but he could only grab the air.

The Maestros that were scattered in the sky tried to make another chain to tie down Mordred's upper body.

But before Mordred could be sealed, it forcefully shook its neck.

"Uwaaaaaaaaaaa!"

Ash lost his balance and was thrown up into Fontaine Palace like a cannonball.

-This is a lie... It must be...?

He was approaching the tower in the middle of Fontaine Palace.

If he was to hit into such stone wall...he will definitely die.

-Is this the end...? Is Eco and I... Going to end right here?

Right at this moment.

『Almete, Gorjal, Peto...』

The voice of the spell was coming from his 'Seikoku' that had spread all over his body.

『Espaldar, Brafoneras, Faldaje...』

It was definitely Eco's voice.

『Escarcelas, Bufetas, Hombreras, Brazales...』

Compare to the previous times, every single word that Eco said was followed by a deep tone.

『Codales, Antebrazos, Manoplas...』

Without any reason, Ash felt courage from within.

『Quijotes, Guardas, Grebas... Escarpes...』

Lastly, Eco was left with the last word.

『-Espolón!』

Ash, who was quickly going to crash into Fontaine Palace, was surrounded by holy light.

It felt as if he was surrounded by angel's wings.

Even though Ash had an illusion of himself ascending to heaven... Eco's voice had disrupted these peaceful feeling.

『"You absolutely must accept my feelings!"』

Part 18

As he opened his eyes, Ash was standing at the highest point of Fontaine Palace.

"I- I am saved?"

He saw Mordred was standing ferociously with only two legs while still being bound by the chains of the Maestros.

All of the nine eyes were burning deeply with the flames of rage and each looked like a scarlet star. Even though he was trying his best to break free from the existing chains, those Maestros kept on creating new chains.

"This... What is this feeling?"

Ash was looking at his own body.

His entire body was emitting heat and was overflowing with magic.

It has to be the Ark that Eco presented to me— Yet to Ash's dismay, what he was wearing right now was still his cloths that looked like rags.

There was not even an Ark that could be seen.

Even so, Ash still continued to feel safe as if he was protected by the Ark. Furthermore, the 'Seikoku' that was on his entire body was alive.

What is happening?

『Hey, why are you daydreaming! Quickly use the Ark-weapon!』

Eco's voice was once again could be heard in his mind

"Eco...? What is happening?"

『T-that is...?』

Without any reason, Eco became silent. It felt as if she was embarrassed because of a certain something.

As if to speak on Eco's behalf, another voice appeared in his mind.

『Huhu. That is an original Ark that Eco has created on her own. However, it is still incomplete and even the shape has not been decided on yet.』

"This voice... Are you Navi!"

『The Ark represents proof of the oath of a dragon that swears to hand over their body and feelings to their knight. At the same time, it was a proof that it was connected to the Master's heart. Right now, you are recognized as Avalon's knight.』

『I-I only wanted to get back my own body!... It was never meant to be given to you!』 Eco expectantly added.

『Ara? Who is the person who was crying because she was worried about Ash? I wonder.』

『"Sh-Shut up!"』

Eco and Navi seemed to have started an argument.

Ash made a difficult smile because only they could still have the mood to quarrel even during such a dangerous situation.

All the negative emotions like insecurity and fear had disappeared.

However- Right after that, Ash had a bad premonition as if a pair of cold hands held on to his spirit. When he raised his head, Mordred's eyes were filled with sparks and were marking him.

It had obviously begun to take notice of Ash who had only just previously been disregarded as a louse.

"Guuuuuoooooooooooooooooooooooooooo...!"

Although Mordred was still bound by those magic chains, after putting in some effort, he still managed to open his jaws

There was a ball of light that could be seen appearing in front of his nose and it was slowly expanding-

Ash felt a large amount of energy from it. It was thanks to the Ark that his senses had sharpened.

Navi warned Ash in his mind.

『That's bad. Even though Mordred has not completely fused with me, he is still very strong...!』

"Rest assured. I will personally deal with it."

Ash immediately started to search for information regarding his Ark-weapon. Thanks to his experience in equipping those mimics, he was able to complete his search in a short time.

Ash smiled from within his heart.

The Ark-weapon forming in his mind was undoubtedly the strongest sword that had ever existed.

Ash readied his posture and started to chant the spell.

"An iron that could slash through anything..."

For every word he said, his 'Seikoku' that was all over his body was emitting heat and reacted strongly to it.

"A holy sword meant for a knight of all knights—"

At the same time... Ash felt an overflowing unlimited amount of magic emanating from his palm.

The one and only treasured sword that had been passed down through generations by generations in the Avalon's holy dragons' emperor's family had now shaped its form in Ash's palm.

"Appear— Excalibur!"

It was not only a huge brave and beautiful sword but also an Ark-weapon.

On its silvery white hilt were many scarlet colored Millenniums and they were shining brightly.

After he wielded the holy sword with both hands tightly, Ash leaped.

At the same time, Mordred was about ready to throw out its dragon breath.

That one ball of light, started to emerge, with such overwhelming power that could destroy the entire capital, to ground level, within the blink of an eye. Followed by some purple electric bolts flashing around Mordred's head, the ball of light was released at Ash's direction.

To make matters worse, Ash couldn't avoid it because the entirety of Fontaine Palace and the capitol City were right behind him.

No— In reality, I won't even need to avoid it.

"Uooooooooooooooooooooooooooooo!"

Ash as if he had forgotten about his fear rushed towards the ball of light.

In respons to Ash's verve, the Millenniums at the hilt of the holy sword increased their radiance giving out a bright light.

The presently shapeless Ark was releasing all its magic.

"Kirisakeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeee!" ^[28]

Just before being swallowed by that attack, Ash swung the most powerful strike.

—Cut!!! ^[29]

At the same time the lump of energy was split into two, Ash was in mid-air. His vision was full of white and he could see nothing at all.

If not because of the protection he received from the Ark, all the cells in his body would have been vaporized to hot plasma. Ash was indeed slashing through such high amount of thermal energy.

In the end, his vision finally widened.

The dragon breath that was sliced into two had its trajectory changed and each had landed at the Fontainia plains on both sides of the capital and had exploded.

Although it was a huge explosion, apart from the strong wind, Fontaine City remained intact.

Ash lifted again Excalibur and pointed it at Mordred's head.

At that moment, there was a creepy voice coming from Ash's mind.

...Hold on! If you harm this body, the daughter of Avalon will also be—

The nine eyes kept on blinking as if it still had something to say.

"Haa! Now you start to beg from me... Know your place, Mordred!"

Ash remained determined and continued to land at the head.

Of course Ash knew that this body originally belonged to Eco.

He never had the intention to simply slash around with this sword.

However, to get rid of Mordred's spirit, he needs Eco to bear with it for a few more moments.

What Ash intended to do was not to kill Eco but to make her lose her strength.

Where is the best place to land my attack?

There is not enough time to think of such complicated problems.

It is because apart from Eco's and his own life, Ash was burdened with the lives of millions of residents of the capital. Ash decided to wager everything he had in the only possibility he could think of.

"Eat this, Mordred!"



Ash was landing at full speed.

What are you trying to do...? Do you want to follow the Julius's footsteps and become a 'dragon slayer'? I can't understand this, I just can't understand this...!

Ash didn't reply and had no intention of doing so.

"Whether you are a god or a devil—"

Ash's sword and Mordred's horn clashed with each other.

"All the dragons will have to listen to my command, not to mention—"

After he had pinpointed the crucial point to release Eco, Ash swung Excalibur—

"If it is my P.A.L!"

Followed by a sound of a metal clashing with rocks, the night sky was swallowed by a white light.

The thing that was chopped off by Ash and was flying in mid-air was the left horn.

"Guuuuoooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooo...!"

Mordred's roar was echoing in the night.

Part 19

『"Huhu. Mordred must be running away with his tail curled up behind him^[30] even though a spirit shouldn't have any tails." 』

Mordred's spirit was running under the night sky towards the east while he was seen by Navi.

On the eastern side of the country is Chevron Kingdom's land.

『"So in the end he has escaped to Chevron Kingdom... I must wait until he rises again before I can have him captured. Right now... I should give praise to Avalon's Knight." 』

Navi gave herself a cheer and smiled.

Eco's spirit was no longer beside her.

Part 20

Ash's final blow had chopped off Eco's left horn.

Last month during the time Ash was in the infirmary, he had bitten Eco's horn. Furthermore, her left horn being chopped off made her recall that feeling.

It was that 'happy' feeling that dragged Eco's spirit out.

Her heart's memories and her body memories.

When both of them were thinking the same thing, Eco's spirit managed to take back its own body and the combined effort got rid of Mordred's spirit.

Not only is this method impractical, its succession rate too is just as low.

However, Eco's clearly remembered the feeling that Ash gave her.

—Navi had seen it all.

The body of the huge dragon had started undergoing changes inside the glaring light.

The skin color that was originally black had turned back to its original silvery white color.

As for those nine creepy eyes, they had merged and returned to two clear scarlet eyes.

Then-

The body that was bigger than Fontaine Palace was shrinking slowly and, after some time, finally turned back into a young teenage girl with pink hair.

Ash gently hugged the angel like naked body in mid-air.

Although Eco was blushing, she still placed her hand on Ash's back and hugged her knight.

"Princess of Avalon ~A.S.B.1365.7~" is closed.

Epilogue

Part 1

"Haa... Haa..."

Anya had run out from Beowolf just before Eco had totally crushed it. She then hid in the secret passage underneath Fontaine City.

Although Dr. Hoffman and the rest of the crew managed to escape, they were spotted by the guards and quickly captured.

Anya, by relying on her whip to knock out the guards, was the only person who managed to successfully hide in the underground secret passage. Still, she had received a great mental shock.

It was about Milgauss's intentions.

Even when Beowolf had been crushed, Milgauss still cannot be seen.

Even though they had prearranged many different types of communication methods in case of any emergency, Milgauss didn't even try to contact her. Could it be that Milgauss was facing some kind of trouble?

Or- Am I just a something that has lost its value and was tossed off?

"*Sob* ... *Hick* ..."

When she thought about the worst possible situation, she cried. Right now, Anya wanted to cry while shouting out loud.

At that moment, there were explosions of bright lights in front of her and Anya couldn't see anything.

"...Urgh!"

When Anya realized they were flash bangs that were modified from the bright-dragon-crystal lamps—

"The rats of the Empire! We are the Foreign Force of the Knight's Country! We will spare your lives if you choose to surrender! We will guarantee you the treatment of a prisoner of war according to the contents of the international agreement!"

A strict voice was echoing in the passage. She felt as if she had heard the voice somewhere before.

"That voice... Could it be!"

Anya while covering her face from shone by the lights, stared at the direction in front of her.

Just as Anya had expected, the girl was riding a Basilisk.

The military presence emitted by the girl was strong even though she looked like a child.

There were numerous strong guys that were beside her.

If I am right, isn't that girl the person who occupied the church and faked her name as 'Avdocha the Convicted' and wasn't she arrested?

Why would someone who was guilty be leading the Foreign Force and guarding the Capital?

So the official announcement was a hoax?

No, right now, that is not important at all —Anya shook her head.

She must try to escape.

"Either I try... or I die."

Anya held the whip on her right arm and leaped with the intention to die.

Part 2

"Huu. Just as I thought... I must do everything my own."

Avdocha, riding on the Basilisk, was mumbling something in dissatisfaction.

The girl's skill was unexpectedly good and three of her subordinates had already been knocked out.

However, Avdocha was leading altogether eight subordinates and she herself was a veteran who was well known all over the world.

Thus, the winning side of this fight had already been decided right from the start.

"Back to the topic, how dare the Empire's military use my people as their subordinates... Tsk."

After Avdocha alighted down from Kuu-chan, the Basilisk, she walked towards the girl who was lying down on the ground.

The girl had lost consciousness and was not moving at all.

Avdocha used a bright-dragon-crystal lamp to have a closer look on the girl's face.

No matter how she looked at, her appearance, her tribal wear and her whip that she had chosen as her choice of weapon, all of them were the style of a Tantalos. Anyhow, Avdocha was born in the mountain areas and she knew them well.

"Huh! This muffler...?"

Avdocha was attracted to the girl's muffler.

"The patterns on this muffler... Could it be!"

Avdocha immediately had the muffler removed from the girl's neck.

She was inspecting the muffler.

After a while, she saw some Tantalos words that had been sewn on the muffler.

-Shamara Kiltzkaya.

"Is this girl my...!"

Avdocha was looking at the girl's face carefully.

The girl right in front of her. —She has some of the features of her long lost sister.

Part 3

The next morning.

Today was the scheduled day for the continental congress-'Elysium', but it had been canceled due to the recent incident.

The organizer Raquel IV had officially announced the cancellation of the continental congress 'Elysium'.

Apart from that, Paladin Oswald had been ordered to investigate the previous night's incident. Then she left with sacredship Esperanza.

Many people were amazed by her leadership even though she is still just nine year old.

Right after Esperanza had left the Knight's country, the rest of the people had started to return to their own country. Only Klaus Viderhausen, whose airship the Beowolf had been destroyed, returned to the borders in a horse carriage.

What will be the next action taken by Zepharos Empire?

Also how are they going to deal with Eco who is the Avalon's holy dragons' emperor family's Princess— It seemed that the Knight's Country government's days of headaches will still continue.

Part 4

Ash and Eco were still staying in Fontaine Palace's guest room.

"It huuurts!"

Although he was just discharged by the hospital a few days ago, he was now again forced to recover while lying on his bed.

Strictly speaking, Ash didn't suffer any serious injuries and the 'Seikoku' that was spread all over his entire body had turned back to normal.

According to the palace's doctor the only sentence he said was— "Ash is suffering from muscle fatigue."

That's right, Eco's first original Ark was an armour that bears a strong side effect. Those prior mimics that Ash wore couldn't even be compared with this.

"..."

Eco was sitting beside the bed and was worrying about Ash who was currently sleeping.

It was probably a result of the incident but Eco, who always acted high and mighty, was actually sitting politely, quietly and elegantly.

Looking at Eco's expression, Ash's heart was beating faster.

As long as she kept quiet, she will be one of the most beautiful girls.

Eco, while showing a worrisome expression, doesn't only look like a graceful white liliun—but also looked more mature.

"Hey... Are you really alright?"

Eco was asking while worrying.

Although Ash's body was still hurting, he managed to squeeze out a smile.

"This is the third time you ask this question, don't you realize?"

"But... You are... Like I thought, it was all my fault—"

Ash immediately interrupted Eco.

"The doctor said it was just muscle fatigue and it has nothing to do with you. It was because that I don't have enough training. When we return to Ansarivan, I will train my body more... Also... I should be the one apologizing to you."

Ash made up his mind and sat up straight. Although the pain was unbearable from his waist to his back, he still held on to it.

"Hold on, you shouldn't be getting up, right!?"

As if to keep Eco quiet, Ash touched Eco's horn.

"...!"

Eco's body was responding to it but she had no intention of running away. She allowed Ash to touch her.

Ash kept on touching to surface of her horn.

"Sorry... It was my fault."

The blow from holy sword Excalibur had caused some after effect, even to Eco who had turned back into a girl.

There was now a dent in one of her horns.

While Ash was touching her horn... Eco, while being worried, said:

"T-That's nothing... It is just a small dent. I am sure that will immediately grow back."

"Really?"

"Don't you look down on a dragon's recovering strength!"

"I see... That's great."

Ash could finally forget about his worries.

I know it, only round and shiny horns fits Eco best.

When he was thinking about that, Ash suddenly felt that Eco was cute.

Without a single warning, he hugged Eco.

"Hold...!"

Eco was blushing, but she didn't resist, on the other hand, she embraced Ash. Her smell was nice and Ash could clearly hear the sounds of a child's heart beat.

Eco, being hugged by Ash with both hands, found her body heating up. Her face looked as if smoke was coming out from it.

Seeing her embarrassed looks, Ash hugged Eco even harder.

"I am your knight. No matter what happened, this fact will never change. That is why from today onwards—"

"...I hate that. I can never bring myself to like that!"

Ash was stunned by the unexpected answer.

"I am happy that... I am your Pal... And. You are my knight... But..."

Eco was embarrassed and stuttered.

"B-But... I hate this. I cannot be satisfied with just this! Even though I am not sure why, I know that I just can't accept this!"

Eco was trying her best to explain to Ash.

"...I have searched the dragweiss regarding this feeling and I still don't know anything... Do you know what is it?"

"T-That's...!"

Her watery scarlet eyes was passionately looking at Ash

There were also her pearl white teeth and her shining pink lips.

Unknown to him, Ash was attracted to those lips.

"Eco..."

Ash was speaking as if he was moaning and focused his sight on Eco's face.

Eco probably knew what Ash was thinking and closed her eyes.

Ash too had closed his eyes and slowly, slowly moved his face closer.

Suddenly- Bang! and the door swung open.

"Hey! Even when you are still a patient... How shameless can you be!"
Silvia was shouting at the top of her voice upon entering.



Seeing that Ash and Eco were hugging each other, she stood still on her ground. The other person, besides the angry Silvia, was Lucca.

She had preserved herself from the danger of being blown off from the strong winds. This is what would one expect from the genius from the Eckbald.

Lucca remained silent. She was looking at Ash with her purple crystal like eyes.

"...Beast!"

However, obscene words came from the delicate and pretty face.

"W-What did you say!"

Ash felt that his face were on fire and let go of Eco.

"What, tsk...!"

Eco who was also red in the face and crawled down from the bed.

"B-Before that... why are you here?"

Ash asked politely but Silvia remained angry.

"Of course we heard that you were hurt and was sleeping so I personally took my time to visit you! How dare you say... "Why am I here!""

"Waaa! Sorry...!"

Silvia was pressuring Ash. However, Ash indeed had said something unnecessarily and must reflect on it.

"O-One more thing... Prince Julius..."

When he saw Silvia... Ash remembered about Julius. Anyway, since they are siblings, their looks are a little similar.

Julius had personally piloted Silvanus to allow Ash to ride on Eco. In the end, Ash remembered that Silvanus crashed and there was an explosion.

Just by thinking about Julius's death, Ash felt that he had trouble breathing. To Silvia, she can finally meet her brother after ten years, but...

"—Why are you talking about me?"

At that moment, a man appeared from the semi closed door. Ash was shocked.

"Prince Julius...!?"

At that instant, Ash thought that he had seen a ghost.

However, the person who walked into the room was Julius himself. But he continued to wear his mask, which is probably because it was inappropriate for him to move around and show his face.

"You are alright! But how did you escape...?"

Upon hearing Ash's question, Julius replied with a wry smile.

"When Silvanus lost control, I jumped out with a parachute. I was just moments away from dying."

"I see... That's great."

Even though Ash was no longer worrying, Julius in turn showed a worrisome look.

"Now is not a time to be celebrating. I clearly felt that Mordred's spirit was escaping towards the east..."

"...what you are trying to say is?"

"He is probably in Chevron Kingdom now. Don't you even think that he has been destroyed. The war between Avalon and Nehalennia is still far from over."

"How is that..."

After listening to Julius's explanation, Ash felt that he had received a blow.

The blow that Ash dealt was not to kill Mordred but to take back Eco's body from him.

Eco probably saw that Ash was worrying and stared at his face and said his name.

"Ash...?"

"Nothing. Even if Mordred appears again, I will protect you—I swear."

As if to not let Eco remain frightened, Ash smiled.

Eco immediately blushed and lowered her head.

Ash while patting her head looked at the scenery outside.

Even though a shocking incident had happened yesterday, today's sky was unusually clear.

...The problems waiting to be solved were like mountains.

Mordred who escaped to Chevron Kingdom.

Zepharos Empire who declared that their huge airship was destroyed by the Knight Country's huge dragon.

And also the long history of the war between Avalon and Nehalennia...

Ash nearly fainted just from thinking about all these problems.

In short, I would like to take a good rest in Ansarivan— The rest of the problems can be solved later. Ash made a wish.

"The Knight of ECO IV" is closed.

References

1. ↑ It has about the same usage as 'cheers'.
2. ↑ It is a proverb that means to touch the tender spot, but since she speaks in a stern tone I'll use the one written on top.
3. ↑ 妖精, mythical creatures in East Asian culture, who can transform into beautiful women. To really force a translation, it can be translated into a fairy or elf, but since she does not really match the characteristic of both I'll just let it be.
4. ↑ Sound of stomach grumbling.
5. ↑ アロンヌ a place in France correct me if I'm wrong
6. ↑ Originally: 失礼致します the original meaning means something like pardon for my interruption or excuse me.
7. ↑ 煩い it is something like 'you are noisy'.
8. ↑ The original meaning was something like evening time.
9. ↑ Note. High and mighty form.
10. ↑ Chest and breast is written in the same kanji.
11. ↑ 竜車, RyuuSha normally it means an imperial carriage, but in this novel it means a dragon powered carriage.
12. ↑ フォンティーン is for Fontaine and I'll put Fontainia for フォンティニヤ
13. ↑ 兄上, a very polite way to call your elder brother.
14. ↑ 父上, a very polite way to say father.
15. ↑ グローリン: Money. I guess the term is patterned after 'florins'. It will have to do for the moment.
16. ↑ オルトフォン
17. ↑ 美男 binan, beautiful man, something you can usually see when reading Josei manga.
18. ↑ The ARK here is a ship not an armour
19. ↑ This is written in order form.
20. ↑ Third grade is considered low grade (or third-class, whereas first-class is the highest) —and it usually means hentai. For those who don't know what hentai mean... err... google it...
21. ↑ a womens foot wear. [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mule_\(shoe\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mule_(shoe))□

22. ↑ Liliium is a genus of herbaceous flowering plants growing from bulbs, all with large prominent flowers. Lilies are a group of flowering plants which are important in culture and literature in much of the world. Wikipedia
23. ↑ Humble form is a way to express yourself in Japanese when you are speaking to a person from a higher social status.
24. ↑ note: Dr Hoffman's 'DR' is a PHD holder's Dr and not a medical Dr.
25. ↑ A way to address a girl from a high family status.
26. ↑ 面目次第も有りません have also the meaning of 'It is a shame I don't have the power to...'
27. ↑ 青年, man with age range between 20- 30.
28. ↑ 斬り裂け. Means to get split and break apart.
29. ↑ 斬. It was a word that was usually shouted when someone wanted to cut/slash/chop/kill off something.
30. ↑ A proverb. Basically, if an animal is defeated, it will run off with its tail between its legs thus making sure it is not wagging in the air to be bitten off.

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